Walsall & Willenhall
CHRONICLE
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£1.2m improvements to help town centre traffic flow

MAJOR REVAMP FOR BUSY ISLAND

Report by Charlotte Callear

A £1.2 million scheme to ease congestion at the busy Mellish Road roundabout in Walsall has been revealed.

Improvements to the island on an arterial route into the town centre will include a new link road being built.

The plans are part of a larger £5.2m regeneration project to improve travel in the area.

A new link road will bridge the two arms of the Lichfield Road by the Mellish Road roundabout which means vehicles will no longer need to turn left at the roundabout when coming out of the town and heading to Rushall.

This will help increase capacity at the junction which was originally designed and built around 40 years ago.

Work is expected to start early spring to be completed by summer.

Ward councillor Aftab Nawaz said: "I have had a briefing from officers and spoke to residents. Their main concern is disruption while the works go on.

Complaint

"It is a very congested in the morning during rush hour and we have a lot of people in the Butts area next to the roundabout who get fed up.

"A constant complaint I get is drivers use the Butts area as another option. But if it makes traffic flow quicker in that area, I think anyone will be pleased and I am in favour of it."

It is part of Walsall Town Centre Access Package where four major regeneration projects are set for the borough.

The council is one of three local authorities to be awarded the funding alongside Birmingham and Solihull.

The four regeneration projects are the £100,000 Bloxwich North Park and Ride extension, £1.75m ring road improvements, £1.66m cycling and walking improvements and £2.5m local network resilience.

Finally, junctions into the town centre along the A454 and A4148 will be improved as part of the M6 Junction 10 scheme.

Members of the public can get more information and express their views at The Butts Primary school, Teddersley Street on February 28 from 4.15pm to 8.45pm.

YOUNGSTERS ON TRACK FOR MILES OF SMILES

St Mary's CE Primary School pupils launch the Mile 4 Joel event in memory of former pupil Joel Richards, who was killed by a terrorist in Tunisia

Terror victim – Joel Richards

A NEW fitness challenge has been launched by a Black Country charity which was set up in memory of three terror victims.

'A Mile for Joel' sees youngsters urged to complete one mile of exercise – whether it is walking, running, swimming, cycling or any other activity.

The initiative has been organised by Smile for Joel, a charity set up to honour Saddlers fans Joel Richards, Adrian Evans and Patrick Evans who were killed in Tunisia in 2015.

Raised

Smile for Joel was set up by Joel's mother Suzy Evans and her son Owen to support other families who have been affected through similarly traumatic experiences. It has already raised more than £100,000 since it was set up.

A Mile for Joel was launched at St Mary's Primary in Wednesbury, where Joel was a former pupil. Children are asked to donate £2 to take part in the challenge – with £1 going to their school and the other £1 to Smile for Joel.

The mile challenge could be completed either during PE lessons or outside of class.

A Smile for Joel statement says there are 'three excellent reasons' to take part. "This is a fantastic activity which is inclusive for all ages/ability which helps towards their wellbeing. This activity will support much-needed school funds.

"By supporting Smile for Joel you will be helping families affected by homicide."

To contact Smile for Joel or for more information visit smileforjoel.com or facebook.com/smileforjoel/

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CRIME

Call for action over stabbings

THE Government is barely scratching the surface in its efforts to tackle knife crime and needs to do more, a senior police official has warned days after another stabbing in Walsall.

Ashley Bertie, the assistant police and crime commissioner for the West Midlands, has called for stricter laws over the sale of weapons online.

His concerns echo those of council leaders in Walsall who have warned 'enough is enough' following the stabbing at the weekend which left an 18-year-old seriously hurt. The victim was found badly wounded in Borneo Street, near to the junction with the busy Lichfield Road, at 10am on Saturday.

Neighbours rushed to help when the injured man's distraught mother raised the alarm. Police said the teenager was in a stable condition in hospital on Monday. It is the latest in a string of shocking knife attacks which has seen four people stabbed to death in the borough during the past 12 months.

Official crime figures have shown that nationally stabbing deaths among young people are at their highest level for eight years. In the year to June 2017 there was a 26 per cent increase in knife crime.

● Enough – Page 3

HEALTH

Manor pest bills hit £3,000 a year

WALSALL Manor has had to spend £3,000 a year tackling mice, rats, wasps and other pests. A Freedom of Information request asking for details of pest control call-outs between 2013 and 2017 revealed the problems and the bills faced by Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust.

In the 2017/18 financial year there were 10 call-outs. They included rat and mice sightings in the main entrance and clinical measurement unit. A wasp nest was also discovered in the hospital. In the financial year before, a mouse was spotted in a ward kitchen.

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INSIDE

Rallying round for Royston . . .

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abbey curtains

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Time to celebrate for young learners

Young learners mark their success

THE achievements of young people in Walsall have been celebrated, in time to mark the opening of a new skills training centre. Skills Training UK has moved its local centre from Tameway Tower in Bridge Street to Townsend House in Park Street.

And to officially recognise the launch, a celebration event was held to recognise the achievements of local young people who have been learning vital skills and qualifications to help them move into a job or further education. The 20 learners – aged 16-24, many of whom struggled at school, needed extra educational support or faced challenging circumstances at home – all received certificates to acknowledge their progress.

They were joined by the Mayor of Walsall, Marco Longhi, who said: "Never give up on learning, with a positive attitude nothing can stop you achieving."

Pamju Uppol, 24, from Bilston, was given an award after she completed qualifications in English and retail, as well as undertaking a work placement at Pets At Home. She said: "The tutors have really helped to build my confidence and provided me with the opportunities to use my skills. I feel more prepared for my future."

Skills Training UK's director of education and social mobility Graham Clarke said: "We are very proud to celebrate the progress all our learners have made since joining our programmes."

Lock-up on hold for boy racer in 70mph drive

A TEENAGE Walsall street racer has been handed a three-month suspended custody term after driving at speeds of 70mph in a 30 zone.

Daejon Nanton, aged 18, admitted contempt of court after flouting Birmingham's car cruising injunction on the evening of Sunday, January 14.

The city's injunction, which runs until October 2019, means anyone caught racing or joining unauthorised vehicle rallies on the city's streets will be held in contempt of the ruling and can be put before a judge.

The injunction spans the whole of Birmingham and also covers wider anti-social motoring like riding in convoy, performing stunts, revving engines, blaring horns and playing loud music at vehicle gatherings. Officers carried out a pre-planned operation in the Nechells and Washwood Heath areas of Birmingham responding to complaints from residents about people gathering to race or perform stunts in their cars. As well as Nanton's suspended sentence he was also fined £300 when he appeared at Birmingham magistrates court last week.

Denied

Three other men arrested on the same night also appeared at court. Abdur-Rahman Ditta, 27 from Bromford, admitted breach of the injunction and will be sentenced at a later date. Tyrone Gordon, 31 from Nechells, and Jermaine Saa, 26 from Dunstall, Wolverhampton, denied the offence and will stand trial in a month's time.

Superintendent Dean Hatton, head of force traffic, said: "The sentence handed to Nanton today sends a clear message that the courts will not tolerate this anti-social and dangerous activity on our streets and anyone flouting the injunction will face a prison sentence.

"Should Nanton be caught taking part in any further street racing, he will serve his prison sentence along with punishment for any subsequent offences."

Supt Hatton added: "We've taken a really firm stance on street racers in recent years: More than 200 have been taken to court and handed heavy fines and driving bans. And the High Court order – secured by Birmingham City Council – now gives us additional powers to take offenders to court."

Fans rally for Saddlers' Royston

Royston seen with his 70th birthday cake

Royston with Don Martin from the supporters club travel section

FOOTBALL fans are rallying behind a Crowdfunder appeal to help buy a special chair for a leading Saddlers supporter who is battling cancer.

Royston Randle, the travel secretary for Walsall FC Supporters Club, has chronic mycleoid leukaemia and an aggressive form of prostrate cancer.

His great niece, Chantelle Walker, has launched the appeal to raise £500 to buy him an electric riser chair. She said: "He has fallen over twice in the last two weeks whilst doing his beloved role as travel secretary for Walsall Football Supporters Club. He is finding it extremely difficult to get on and off his chair, as a once independent 70-year-old, this is causing him to feel down and like a burden.

"He starts his radiation treatment in a week or so, which will make him very weak, so I thought if I could raise some funds for an electric riser chair, it would make this difficult time for him that little bit easier."

The appeal was launched a few days ago and within 12 hours had reached 39 per cent of the target figure. It currently stands at around £270. Among the well-wishers who have commented on the page is Walsall FC director Roy Whalley who said: "You have given tremendous lifetime support to the Saddlers, and your work for the Travel Section of the Walsall Football Supporters Club is legendary. Best of luck with the radiotherapy. Banks's Stadium would not be the same without you on matchdays."

Chantelle added: "He loves Walsall FC and he has memorabilia that is older than me! I set up the fundraising page as a way of saying thank you to him for being such a wonderful uncle and I'm so amazed by the response from all the Saddlers fans that have been saying he is a legend!" To donate visit www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/chantelle-walker-3

Players kick off support for hospice with shirts

WALSALL'S finest rugby players will scrum down for St Giles Hospice this season after the town's club picked up the ball to become a champion for the charity.

Players and supporters at Walsall RFC aim to raise much-needed funds and kick the hospice's profile high over the bar in 2018.

St Giles is the first charity ever to appear alongside sponsor logos on players' kits. Ian Bradshaw, Chairman of Sponsors at Walsall RFC, said: "We are absolutely delighted to link up with St Giles Hospice and are really proud to be doing our bit to help such a fantastic cause.

"We all know the brilliant work that St Giles does for people across the area."

Ian said that many people at the club had experienced at first hand the care offered by St Giles. "We have all seen how they work to ease suffering and grief for local people and everybody was really enthusiastic to help," added Ian.

The club held a charity day for St Giles on February 3 for their big 1st XV clash against Newcastle (Staffs). Walsall RFC will also be hosting St Giles collecting tins at the clubhouse in Delves Road, Walsall, and offering St Giles the use of their facilities to host bucket collections and offer further help with fundraising.

Urban trek for ramblers group

REEDSWOOD will be the destination for the Walsall Group of the Ramblers on Saturday, who will be staging a short walk as part of its winter programme.

The meeting point is the car park at Oak Park C. P. (Lichfield Road) at 9.30am, the walk is about four miles.

More details can be obtained from the walk leaders on 0121 440 7929.

Then on Sunday the group is heading to Consall, near Leek for a 9.5 mile circular walk.

'Consall and Cheddleton' is a walk through fields to Cheddleton returning by canal towpath.

Non-members are always welcome and can obtain more information from the walk leader on 01922 692929

More information about the Walsall Group is available on the website www.walsallramblers.org.uk also find them on Facebook and Twitter.

Apartments plan get green light

PLANS for 25 studio apartments have been given the green light.

The two storey building at Caldmore Road, Walsall was formerly a fitness centre and will now be transformed under new plans approved by Walsall Council.

Offices bid for nursery turned down by planners

PLANS to convert old offices into a nursery have been refused by local authority officials.

Walsall Council planners rejected proposals put forward at the rear of the property in Walsall Road, Willenhall.

The developer had hoped to build the nursery school for between 20 to 24 children.

Council officers made the decision not to approve the project due to concerns over problems with 'indiscriminate parking'.

There were also questions raised over whether the proposed nursery provision served a local need in the area.

Parking

In a statement, Steve Pretty, head of planning, engineering and transportation at the authority explained: "The proposed change of use to a nursery is likely to lead to indiscriminate parking on Walsall Road, and on the local streets to the detriment of the free flow of traffic and to highway safety."

He continued: "The applicant has failed to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed nursery serves a local need that could not be met within Willenhall District Centre. The proposed use as a result would impact upon the vitality and viability of Willenhall District Centre."

Real ale lovers look to future

ALE fans from across the West Midlands have been invited to a Campaign for Real Ale summit.

The event on Saturday will see Camra's future discussed.

It follow a review of the organisation's purpose and objectives, known as the 'Revitalisation Project'.

Camra members from across the region can learn more about recommended changes and put questions directly to the organisation's national director, Michael Hardman.

All members will then have the chance to vote on whether the recommended changes are adopted as part of the AGM in April.

The meeting will be taking place at 11.30am at Barley Mow in Droitwich. It is open to all members.

Micro-pub to open

A MICRO-pub and coffee shop will be opened after plans were given the go-ahead by Walsall Council. The proposals were welcomed for the new bar on Boundary Road, in Hundred Acre, Streetly.

Selfless student raises cancer cash

Ammarah and friends with Parese Ahmed from Teenage Cancer Trust

A TEENAGER battling cancer and undergoing gruelling chemotherapy treatment has selflessly raised more than £2,000 in just five days for the charity that helped her.

Ammarah Lorgat, a pupil at Joseph Leckie Academy in Walsall, was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma just before Christmas.

Despite the shock, and having to suddenly be put through chemotherapy, the 16-year-old decided to raise money for Teenage Cancer Trust.

She said: "I wanted to fundraise for Teenage Cancer Trust as they are a great charity at helping young people with cancer. They use events and social gatherings to help us meet others going through the same thing.

"They have already boosted my confidence and helped me make new friends."

After enlisting the help of her classmates, they raised £2,050.97 through bake sales, making and selling sweet cones, and selling samosas.

The pupils have presented a cheque to the charity.

Ammarah, of Palfrey, said: "I was overwhelmed with the amount of support given by my school and the generosity of my friends and teachers. I really appreciate it and know the money will be put to good use."

Head of Year 11, Alison Devey said: "This was all organised by Ammarah, which is amazing as she is going through treatment.

"It's been all about raising money for other people and not doing something for herself."

Ammarah is still undergoing treatment but is going into school as much as she can to catch up on her studies and meet with friends.

'Enough is enough' after stabbed teen badly hurt

ENOUGH is enough, council leaders have declared after another stabbing in Walsall which left an 18-year-old seriously hurt.

The victim was found badly wounded in Borneo Street, near to the junction with the busy Lichfield Road, at just 10am on Saturday.

Neighbours rushed to help when the injured man's distraught mother raised the alarm.

Police said the teenager suffered 'serious injuries' but he was in a stable condition in hospital last night. It is the latest in a string of shocking knife attacks which has seen four people stabbed to death in the borough during the past 12 months.

Councillor Mike Bird, leader of the Conservative group in Walsall, said: "Life is becoming cheap in Walsall. I feel enough is enough. Knife crime doesn't have any boundaries anymore. People need to realise there are consequences to carrying knives and lives get ruined."

Councillor Mohammad Nazir, former mayor and deputy leader in Walsall, added: "We have to be tougher on people carrying weapons. We are getting quite a lot now more than ever.

Bleeding

"Enough is enough. We have got to work together and get tougher."

Neighbours rushed to help the injured man after his mother raised the alarm. They found the victim found bleeding in the porch of the house, located on Lichfield Road at the junction with Borneo Street.

Police and the air ambulance attended the scene. Borneo Street was sealed off for forensic examination and officers conducted house to house inquiries. A police spokesman said: "The victim is still in hospital. He has had surgery and is in a stable condition."

In June last year, gym instructor James Brindley, 26, was murdered in Aldridge town centre while in October, Reagan Asbury, 19, died after being stabbed in the neck at a boxing match at Walsall Town Hall. Police have asked for anyone who witnessed the latest stabbing to call 101 or anonymously on 0800 555 111.

James leads all-stars to help Isla

Players and supporters line up before the game, with former Saddlers player Adam Chambers, centre

FORMER Saddlers ace James Chambers joined an all-star team at a charity match and helped raise thousands of pounds to fund cancer treatment for a two-year-old girl.

Ex-Wolves players Joleon Lescott, Jody Craddock and Lee Naylor were among the pros that turned out for West Midlands All Stars against Dormston School Old Boys match.

Some 500 people turned out to watch the game at Lye Town FC on Sunday and around £6,000 was raised to help pay for Isla Austin to fly to America for treatment.

She is in remission but the new treatment will help stop her from getting cancer again. Her mother Anna, aged 37, said: "She was diagnosed with cancer on her first birthday. She had chemotherapy, a stem cell transplant, radiotherapy and seven and a half hour operation in surgery. But now she has been given the all-clear which is brilliant."

The cost of the full trip will be £155,000. Anna has been supported by family and friends in reaching the target.

She plans to fly out to New York this week to the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

The charity football match helped to raise the final total needed.

James Chambers in action

NEWS IN BRIEF

Special day in Mylee's memory

FUNDRAISERS united to raise cash in memory of schoolgirl Mylee Billingham who was stabbed in Brownhills.

Well-wishers hosted a fun day fundraiser for the youngster at St James' Church hall in the town.

A gofundme page, www.gofundme.com/mylee-billingham-fund, has already received £3,900 in donations for Mylee's family and a fundraising group has been set up on Facebook.

William Billingham, aged 54, of Valley View is accused of murdering his daughter Mylee on January 20 and is also alleged to have made threats to kill to the girl's mother. He is due to appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court on March 19.

Nursing staff in the spotlight

A ONE-DAY conference will be held to celebrate the improvement in nursing homes in Walsall. The event is being run by Walsall Healthcare Trust, Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group and the West Midlands Patient Safety Collaborative.

Confirmed speakers include Dr Zoe Wyrko, director of workforce for the British Geriatrics Society, and Caroline Maries-Tillot, from Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust.

The conference will be held at The Village Hotel, Walsall, on March 13 from 9am to 4.30pm.

School boost for mayor's charity

THE Mayor and Mayoress of Walsall will be going back to school next week.

Barr Beacon School is holding a challenge alongside the Mayor Councillor Marco Longhi.

The school is raising funds for the Mayor's nominated charity WPH Counselling and Education Service, which benefits young people's mental health.

The form at Barr Beacon that raises the highest amount will welcome the Mayor and Mayoress into their form group for the day on Tuesday, February 27.

Two appear in court on burglary charges

TWO men have appeared at Cannock Magistrates' Court in connection with a burglary at a restaurant.

Raymond Keates, 52 and Matthew Newton, 40, are accused of breaking into a Toby Carvery at Cannock in the early hours of February 11, and stealing cash from games machines.

Keates, of Ingram Road, and Newton, of Field Road, both Walsall, were charged with burglary and remanded in custody.

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COUNTY NEWS

Electrician lit up by £1m jackpot

A MYSTERY EuroMillions winner from the West Midlands has become a millionaire even without touching a ticket.

The lucky electrician, – known as Mr B – scooped the £1m prize in the UK Millionaire Maker draw on February 2 by playing online. He plans to pay off the mortgage, go on holiday and treat the family.

Mr B, who also won £5.30 by matching two main numbers and one 'lucky star' number, played EuroMillions through national-lottery.co.uk

National Lottery spokesman Andy Carter said: "Playing online is increasingly popular."

Pop-up events reaping rewards

TOWNS and cities that host regular pop-up events like farmers' markets and festivals are reaping significant financial rewards, a new report says.

The West Midlands was identified as having the best range of pop-up events, including the Birmingham International Dance Festival, MADE festival and Crufts Dog Show.

A study of 1,000 households found that these more vibrant and active areas saw knock-on effects such as more trade for local businesses.

Gavin Hepburn, director at ATG Access who commissioned the survey, said events also helped to create a greater sense of community spirit.

New recruits for food warehouse

AN employment programme has helped 45 people secure jobs at Iceland's new Food Warehouse in Wolverhampton.

Iceland worked with the Wolves at Work scheme to recruit 50 staff for the shop at the Peel Centre, Stafford Street, It is set to open on March 13.

A total of 45 of the 50 retail assistant and night replenishment assistant roles have been filled by Wolverhampton residents.

Of those, 27 were previously unemployed.

Advice on spotting signs of child abuse

EDUCATION leaders have united to spot the signs of abused children.

More than 150 teachers, lecturers and educational representatives gathered for the child sexual exploitation awareness event, organised by Staffordshire Police and the West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit.

Youngsters learn how to identify grooming and then how to seek support over different forms of abuse.

Firm fined £500k after worker lost leg

A BUILDING company has been fined £500,000 after a worker had to have his leg amputated when he was run over by a tipper truck in Burntwood.

The man suffered the serious injury after being struck on a housing development in the town. He eventually had to have his lower leg removed.

An investigation found a number of tipper trucks were delivering material to the site at the time of the horrific incident. Various ground workers were also directing the drivers to different areas at the same time.

The injured man was walking along a temporary haul road on the site when he was hit. He suffered several broken bones in both legs and feet, as well as severe damage to the blood vessels in his legs.

His right leg was amputated to the knee a year after the incident in October 2015. The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) ruled that there were insufficient protected walkways across the site.

It also ruled there was no control over access to the site and hit Birmingham-based civil engineering contractor MV Kelly with the huge six-figure fine.

The company, which is based in Tyseley, Birmingham, was also ordered to pay costs of £30,000 after pleading guilty to breaching safety regulations.

HSE inspector Katherine Blunt said after the hearing: "Incidents like this should never be allowed to take place. Construction sites should be organised in a way, which prevents pedestrians and vehicles coming into contact with each other."

£3,000 a year costs to rid hospital of vermin

By Alex Ross

A HOSPITAL trust is spending £3,000 a year on pest control – as bosses rid the site of rats, mice and even a wasps nest.

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust used the cash on pest control measures over each of the past four years at Manor Hospital.

A Freedom of Information request asking for details of pest control call-outs between 2013 and 2017 revealed the problems.

In the 2017/18 financial year there were 10 call-outs.

They include rat and mice sightings in the main entrance and clinical measurement unit.

A wasp nest was also discovered in the hospital. In the financial year before, a mouse was spotted in a ward kitchen and a small insect called a silverfish in another.

Boiler

Another wasp nest was discovered outside the neo-natal department in the same period.

Spider mites were found in another ward in the year before as well as rats again, in the boiler room.

Jane Longden, divisional director for estates and facilities at the hospital trust, said: "In common with other large organisations, we retain a pest control budget which provides an ongoing service to the hospital site and allows us to respond to any untoward incidents in a robust and effective manner to ensure the safety and wellbeing of patients and staff across our hospital site."

Last year the Express & Star revealed how Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, which runs New Cross Hospital, spent £93,617 on pest control measures in four years.

This exceeded the £59,347 budget.

Drive to replace town's closed post office

Linda Macklin, Councillor Aftab Nawaz, Sakhwinder Johal, Sarah Campbell-Pallett, Nigel Povey, Ashley HIll and John McLaughlin in Butts Street outside the convenience and grocery shop

RESIDENTS are campaigning for a new post office following a recent closure. The service in Butts Street, within the St Matthew's ward of Walsall, closed a month ago after the resignation of the postmaster.

It left residents in Butts and Hatherton with nowhere to send their post, collect pensions or withdraw cash.

Shopkeeper Sukhwinder Singh Nogales, aged 38, is currently in conversation with Post Office Ltd to arrange for one to open in his convenience and grocery shop in Butts Street. He said: "I had a meeting with them and a few issues were raised with them but I am hoping we will be able to meet their criteria and open up."

Councillor Aftab Nawaz is rallying with residents and has written to Post Office Ltd to urge for a post office to be opened up as soon as possible. A Post Office spokesman said: "The Butts Post Office temporarily closed on January 15, due to the resignation of the current Postmaster and the withdrawal of the premises for Post Office use. We understand and appreciate how much communities rely on our services.

"We would like to reassure customers that we are working hard to restore the service to the community as soon as possible and are committed to maintaining services in the area."

Quarter of call-outs on hate crime end in arrest

ONLY one in four immediate police call-outs to hate crime incidents results in an arrest, according to new figures.

West Midlands Police sent officers to 94 hate crime reports on blue lights in the Black Country following 999 calls last year. But in just 24 of the call-outs was a suspect arrested.

In 20 of the cases, almost a fifth, the victim showed no support for police action. Hate crime is defined as racial, religious, orientation or sexual abuse motivated by hostility and prejudice.

It can include a victim being abused over their identity including their taste in clothing or music. The figures, obtained under a Freedom of Information Act request, show the seriousness of the force in tackling hate crime, but also the difficulties faced.

West Midlands Police force contact manager, Supt Matt Markham said: "We introduced a new system that grades calls on a scale from 1-9 depending on the urgency of the police response, with 1 being an immediate response to a serious incident or where a crime is in progress.

"This new structure gives us a broader range of options and allows us to better tailor the response relative to the nature of the call."

The 94 immediate call-outs were from a total of 324 hate crime incidents reported over 999 calls to the force from the Black Country. They included 100 in Walsall, 99 in Sandwell, 75 in Wolverhampton and 50 in Dudley.

Leaders at the Baitul Atta Mosque, based in Willenhall Road in Wolverhampton, want the force to do more to combat hate crime.

Demolition plan at scrap building

THE home of a 111-year old scrap recycling company which went bust last year could be demolished.

Walsall Council has received a notice to bulldoze the old WH Marren warehouse and offices in Temple Bar, Willenhall. It was established in 1906 and collapsed in July, with 45 staff losing their jobs. It was still owned and run by the Marren family.

Wolverhampton-based housing developer Tatton Hall Homes is behind the proposals to demolish the old business. It is not known whether plans are in place to replace the building.

An architect's statement said: "We give notice that the applicant, Tatton Hall Homes Ltd, has applied to Walsall Council for a determination as whether prior approval is required for the method of demolition."

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Closures of 24 stations 'final nail in the coffin'

CONTROVERSIAL plans to close 24 police bases across the West Midlands have caused a backlash among local politicians. The region's police and crime commissioner (PCC) David Jamieson wants to close the stations to save £5 million, arguing the move will put more officers on the streets.

But critics say it is the latest example of the police 'distancing themselves from the public' at a time when crime is on the rise.

Aldridge-Brownhills Tory MP Wendy Morton said she has written to the PCC over the closure of Aldridge Police Station on Anchor Road.

"The decision by the PCC to close Aldridge Police Station is outrageous," she said. "It is being undertaken without consultation and comes on the back of receiving increased funding from the Government in the recent funding settlement."

Councillor John Murray, who represents Aldridge Central and South for the Conservatives on Walsall Council, said: "We have a great neighbourhood police team and people are questioning where they will go, and will there be an impact on response times.

"The police are distancing themselves from the public. I think Mr Jamieson has got this one wrong."

Stations in Wednesbury, Smethwick, Tipton and Oldbury will also be released from the force's estate as part of the plan.

Rethink call over victims' journeys

STAFFORDSHIRE'S Police & Crime Commissioner wants the NHS to reconsider moving where child victims of serious sexual abuse are examined.

The examinations are due to be moved from facilities in Cobridge, near Stoke-on-Trent, to Walsall, more than 25 miles away.

Matthew Ellis believes this is too long a trip to make for children suffering from such a crime – and wants the NHS to start seeing the children in areas more central to where they live.

Mr Ellis said: "I have instructed officials in my office to work with the police here to encourage NHS England to rethink the alternative options, which I understand need greater flexibility from paediatricians in Staffordshire."

Meet the brewers

A WALSALL pub is hosting a meet the brewers night next week. The event with Stoke-on-Trent's Titanic Brewery is at St Matthew's Hall, part of the Lloyds No 1 chain, in Lichfield Street on February 28 at 6pm.

£20,000 raised to help Armed Forces

HomeServe and the RBL join forces

HOME assistance provider HomeServe has raised more than £20,000 to help service personnel and their families supported by the Royal British Legion.

The total was achieved following a pledge from the Walsall-based company to donate £20 every time a UK customer took out select Plumbing and Heating and HomeServe Cover 8 policies in the days leading up to Remembrance Sunday 2017.

The rest of the £20,422 total was earned after two teams of committed fundraisers from the company – including HomeServe UK CEO Martin Bennett – took on the Birmingham Vélo Business 100 challenge.

The money raised from the 100-mile closed road sportive helped HomeServe reach thefundraising milestone and marked the start of a new charity partnership between HomeServe and The Royal British Legion.

The money was handed over when a team from HomeServe were taken on a tour of a regional Legion Pop-In Centre in Birmingham.

"We're delighted to have joined forces with The Royal British Legion on a new charity partnership," said HomeServe Membership CEO Greg Reed. "And we're even more delighted to have started our partnership by handing over such a sizeable donation from everyone at HomeServe.

"We hope this money goes some way towards help the Legion continue to deliver vital support to our Armed Forces community across the region."

Jane Britton, area manager West Midlands for The Royal British Legion said: "It will make a great difference to those who need it most within the Armed Forces community."

£11m cancer research boost backed by mother

THE mother of a schoolgirl who is bravely battling cancer has welcomed a major cash boost for pioneering medical research.

Isabella Lyttle, aged 10, from Walsall, was diagnosed with a type of childhood cancer called neuroblastoma in 2010.

Her treatment with chemotherapy and radiotherapy initially seemed to be successful but unfortunately she subsequently relapsed three times and needed further treatment, including immunotherapy.

She is still fighting her cancer and has now taken part in eight clinical trials, each with a degree of success. Her parents, Mark Lyttle and Jennie Dalton, are currently raising money to send their daughter to the USA to undergo a new type of immunotherapy not available in the UK.

The indomitable youngster, who has even written a fundraising children's book while in hospital, is also about to embark on her ninth UK clinical trial in Southampton.

Cancer Research UK has now announced plans to invest nearly £11million over the next five years in ground-breaking work at the Cancer Research UK Clinical Trials Unit, based at the University of Birmingham.

The grant will allow doctors and scientists to continue researching and testing better and kinder treatments for patients.

Isabella's mother Jennie said: "It is thanks to clinical trials that Isabella is still here, fighting her cancer and full of hope for the future. We feel really fortunate to have been offered the chance to try new ground-breaking treatments and benefit from the very latest in medical research. It is fantastic that the Cancer Research UK Clinical Trials Unit in Birmingham has received this £11m grant."

The Clinical Trials Unit gives both adults and children with cancer access to innovative treatments and enables them to benefit from the latest discoveries. It has an expert team of over 200 cancer researchers working across a wide range of cancers, including breast, lung, skin, sarcoma, blood cancers and head and neck cancers as well as a unique team for childhood cancer trials.

Back to school for Hollywood star

From left, head teacher Qamar Riaz, Sir Ian McKellen, deputy chief executive officer Jane Millward

HOLLYWOOD star Sir Ian McKellen inspired students and staff alike during a top-secret visit to a school in Walsall.

The A-list actor, best known for playing Gandalf in The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit, visited West Walsall E-ACT Academy before hosting a private audience with a smaller group of pupils.

The Primley Avenue school has been awarded Stonewall 'school champion' status, in recognition of its inclusivity and efforts to tackle discrimination.

Only headteacher Qamar Riaz and a select few others were aware of the 78-year-old actor's visit in advance. Sir Ian met the academy's leadership team before addressing the students and staff during a one-hour speech.

Sir Ian spoke of his struggles growing up a gay man in conservative Britain, and how he only came out at the age of 48. He spoke about his extensive work with Stonewall – he is a founder member and school role model – as well as wider civil rights issues.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Police hunt: Meat cleaver is located

A MEAT cleaver was found as part of a weapons search in the wake of a spate of stabbings in Wolverhampton.

Officers were combing through bushes and undergrowth around Penn Fields following three stabbings in four days. Police have stepped up their presence in the area to reassure residents.

Searches were carried out in Lime Street Park, where a man in his 20s was knifed four times on January 29. That came just days after two schoolboys were stabbed nearby.

A man also suffered serious hand injuries after being attacked in a barber's on Bushbury Lane, Bushbury.

Co-op raiders foiled by smoke

RAIDERS smashed their way into a shop in Burntwood. Three men in balaclavas and beanie hats ripped open the shutter at the Co-op in Morley Road, Burntwood, on Thursday night, but fled when the shop filled with smoke as part of its security system.

They attempted to get into the cigarette counter but left empty-handed, getting away in a black Audi car.

Police have now launched an investigation into the incident, which happened around 10.45pm, and have urged anyone with information to contact 101.

Travel reminder to all pensioners

A PENSIONERS group is reminding elderly people about concessions available to them.

Elderly people can now travel before 9.30am from Monday to Friday for £1 with National Express West Midlands by showing a pass instead of paying the full adult fare. Pensioners can then also travel for free between 9.30am and 11pm on weekdays.

Colin Wilkinson of Walsall Pensioners said: "It became evident people did not know about it so we want to help raise awareness because it is a big help to people who have to get about."

MP: Young people can 'still embrace Brexit'

WALSALL MP Eddie Hughes says young people will embrace Brexit if the right deal is made.

The Walsall North MP has urged the Government to 'get on with it', adding: "With direct flights soon to be available from the UK to Australia, the rest of the world is getting easier to explore – and easier to trade with.

"If we make Brexit a truly global project then younger generations will embrace it.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Handouts of £10k? Why it just won't work

A THOUGHT-provoking report by the Royal Society for the Arts suggests unemployment benefit, child benefit and tax credits should all be stopped, and instead everybody under the age of 55 should receive a one-off handout of £10,000.

Well, to be precise, it is actually proposing two payments of £5,000 each, which could be funded by new taxes on social media giants such as Facebook and Apple.

Now aside from the question about why the over-55s are excluded – discrimination surely? – the proposal will no doubt prove pretty popular with those who are eligible. An extra 10 grand in the back pocket, paid for by global fat cats? What's not to like?

While its title might suggest it is predominantly concerned with opera houses and art galleries, the RSA is actually a serious champion of social reform, with a distinguished history of coming up with radical ideas. Previous fellows include Charles Dickens, Benjamin Franklin, free-market economist Adam Smith and the, er Marxist, Karl Marx, so it encompasses a diverse range of intellectual talent. But while the idea will no doubt stimulate debate, you don't need to be Stephen Hawking – another former fellow – to see why it won't work.

When the Government starts doling out £10,000 bounties to all and sundry, the recipients will inevitably fall into two categories. There will be those who diligently take advice and carefully invest the money in a diverse portfolio of savings, stocks and shares, pensions, and insurance, knowing they may need something to call on for a rainy day.

Then there will be those who will go out and buy a giant flat-screen telly, the latest smartphone – probably made by one of the hated tech giants that the scheme was set up to target and an expensive games console. Next they will book a fortnight's holiday in Benidorm (keeping back a few hundred quid for lager, naturally). And if there's anything left at the end, it will be used as a down-payment to buy a new car on the never-never.

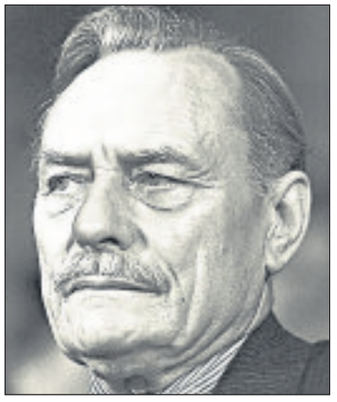
A few years down the line when it all goes pear-shaped, those who have put a bit away will find their investments have been eroded by inflation, not helped by the Government's decision to give everyone a 10-grand handout.

And those who wasted the money? Cue doleful pictures in sympathetic tabloids, and stories about life on the breadline because the Government stopped unemployment benefit, child benefit and tax credits.

Needs to be visible but out of reach of the wreckers

Steve Coogan – back as Alan Partridge. A masterpiece but beaten by The Trip

David Davis – caught up in the everyday haggling over the Brexit deal



Enoch Powell – would be wrong to say that we warmed to each other

I'm torn over push for Enoch plaque

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

I AM torn on this campaign to erect a blue plaque in Wolverhampton to commemorate the city's most significant MP, Enoch Powell. It would be a target for vandals, unless it could be placed somewhere in the city where it would be visible, but not visible enough to cause offence, and was well out of reach of wreckers. Pity they demolished the old Goodyear Chimney. I only interviewed Enoch Powell once. It would be wrong to say we warmed to each other.

A READER points out that, if you give the charity Water Aid £2 a month it can supply water to a family in scorching-dry Africa. So why does Severn-Trent demand £38 a month from him to do much the same in a country where, as he puts it, "it pees down with rain two days out of five on average?" Fair point.

BREXIT - An Everyday Story of Hagglers. In this week's episode M. Barnier says Britain must make up its mind what it wants. Mr Davis says, thanks, Michel, we'll have this. M. Barnier says, non, you cannot have that. Just like last week. Just like next week.

STEVE Coogan is returning to telly with a new series, This Time with Alan Partridge. We can expect another excellent slice of cringe-comedy. And yet, while Partridge is a comic masterpiece, for my money the best thing Coogan ever did was The Trip (2010-2014) in which he and Rob Brydon toured Northern England and Europe, allegedly reviewing restaurants for an upmarket Sunday newspaper. It was stressed that these were "fictionalised versions" of Coogan and Brydon, yet the insecurity and point-scoring of real-life thespians seemed genuine as they flirted with the staff and pitted their best Roger Moore and Sean Connery accents at each other over dinner. Brydon's conversation with one of the petrified corpses in Pompeii was one of the funniest things I've seen on telly, albeit it in very bad taste. So while it's good to see Partridge return, I'd rather see a new series of The Trip.

WE woke a few days ago to two depressingly familiar items of news. In Northern Ireland, time was yet again running out for a decision on forming a government. In Florida, kids were howling in grief after yet another American high-school massacre. The same old headlines keep coming around and it feels like living in a time-loop. Welcome to Groundhog Day.

COUNCIL tax looks set to rise. If the money is to be used for social care, who can complain? Yet doesn't it seem daft to bump council-tax bills up by £100 in April and give millions of us £100 back in winter-fuel allowance in November?

OUR changing language. Military terms once understood by millions of squaddies are a puzzle for Britain's younger generation. This explains a common error, as seen this week in a Daily Mail report about the unexploded device in London: "Navy divers work to diffuse massive 5ft long WWII bomb." Defuse, perhaps?

IN the great Peter Rabbit allergy debate, my sympathies are with the snowflakes. In a new animated film, Peter and his chums defeat their enemy Tom by pelting him with fruit to which he is allergic. A charity, Allergy UK, complained and took some flak on the lines of: "Oh, lighten up, snowflakes, it's only a joke. " And then we learned more about the scene. The fruit brings on such a violent allergic reaction that Tom falls to the ground choking and turning red before stabbing himself with his life-saving Epi-Pen. Not so funny after all, is it? I bet we all know kids whose lives are blighted by severe allergy and who must carry their Epi-Pen at all times. The remarkable thing is that apparently at no stage in the production did any script editors, animators or stars see anything wrong in making a joke about anaphylactic shock. Some parents have called for the scene to be re-shot, so here's an hilarious alternative. The rabbits trick Tom into wearing striped pyjamas and put him on a train to somewhere called Belsen. Oh, lighten up, snowflakes, it's only a joke . . . .

GOOD news. My long-term holiday haunt of Beer in Devon did not win Channel 4's Village of the Year competition. That honour went to Broughshane in County Antrim which I dare say will become a seething trippers' honeypot, allowing Beer to slip back into unjam-packed serenity.

TALKING POINT

Turn-off as television is awash with soaps

SOME wives say they are golfing widows. Me, I'm a TV soaps widower.

Trouble is, while husbands disappear off to the par fours and, no doubt, soak up the atmosphere at the 19th hole, I'm stuck next to 'er indoors, being subjected to whatever minor, or major disaster has befallen one of the characters in Corrie, Emmerdale etc.

You used to know where you stood with what are now termed 'serial dramas', they were on one or two nights a week, one half hour at a time. That's to say, it was only 24 minutes or so, per night of dross to suffer, perhaps once or twice during the week....

Not now – double-length episodes, or the dreaded "We'll be back in Weatherfield in half an hour."

And another thing. Conversation. If you do want to say something during the course of an episode, (I mean, how dare you), women – so-called experts of multi-tasking – press live pause on the remote. Oh no, there's no truck with actually talking in response and keeping a watchful eye on the programme – after all they might miss the nuance of a furrowed brow, or a pantomime grimace, or staring into space before the advert break.

I mean, really, could the acting get any worse? One bloke in Emmerdale is obviously an expert in crying, as that's all he does. Impressive, but surely there's something lacking in emotional range.

Then you've got Gail Platt's hairdresser son in Corrie – the perpetual frowner. I thought I was miserable, but he takes the biscuit!

But getting back to the live pause, when it is pressed, it's like a little part of me dies inside, as I know it will prolong the agony, as it takes even longer to watch!

Still, it could be worse, I mean there could be 20 backed-up episodes of Jeremy Kyle on the planner. Oh no, wait a minute, there are! So on the off chance that there is not a soap being shown, I get the delights of Shane and Demi's convoluted love-life being prodded and probed by Jezzer in front of a highly amused audience.

I now know why they show decent films late at night on the box, it's for long-suffering fools like me who, after Pointless, Eggheads and maybe the news, don't get a look-in for the rest of the evening until their partner is in the land of nod.

Perhaps I'll start knitting, or maybe even, go out? Nah, I'll just suffer in silence, if only so she doesn't press the pause button again!

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Questions over flawed shopping centre purchase

THE Walsall North MP is right to be asking serious questions about the borrowing of £13.8m by the Labour-controlled Walsall Council for the flawed purchase of the Saddlers Shopping Centre.

The council's attempt to 'draw down the shutters' and deny the MP the information he quite rightly seeks suggests it has something to hide.

At the private meeting where the decision was made, no mention was made, in written reports or otherwise, of the £2m plus loss that the Saddlers Centre had made the previous year.... so can we assume that the councillors making the decision to borrow and purchase were blissfully unaware of the state of the finances surrounding the centre or did some members and officers know about this all along? Why did this not come out at that meeting?

I hope the MP doggedly pursues this and that concerned Walsall councillors, do likewise. I also hope the Walsall South MP, in whose constituency the centre stands, also starts to ask some serious questions. The Labour leadership at the time of the decision to purchase – and shortly afterwards – seemed to indicate this was going to be a 'magical money tree' to provide extra funds for social care, mental health facilities and all sorts of other services.

Yet at the time of purchase there were at least six empty retail units in the centre and four months after the takeover by Walsall Council, there remains the same number. This issue will not go away until many unanswered questions are addressed to the satisfaction of elected members and more importantly the taxpayers of Walsall.

PETE SMITH
Blakenall

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Walsall Chronicle, Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

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Funding lack reason for NHS crisis

I AM absolutely sick and tired of hearing politicians blaming the ageing population for the state of the NHS!

When will they come to the realisation that the biggest problem is over-population and lack of funding?

As a recently retired man that has worked most of his life and paid into the system for 50 years I am fed up of being blamed for the state of the health system.

If money that seems to disappear from the government's coffers was redirected to the right departments instead of so called Third World countries with space programmes then things might be different.

So wake up to the real problem instead of blaming the people that made this country once great!

IAN HUNTER
Willenhall

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Health service staff coping brilliantly

REFERRING to the usual adverse criticism of our NHS, I think it is appropriate to write in praise of this service.

In recent weeks, I have had reason to attend the endoscopy and audiology departments at the Manor Hospital.

The attention I received was second to none and the nursing staff in particular were very pleasant, even though the place is being run on a shoestring. They coped brilliantly in the face of a serious shortage of staff.

It was clear to me that the whole place is being run by the nursing staff and the cleaners at that level. When you prune a tree, you must start at the top, not at the roots.

PAULINE POOLE
Willenhall

Closure of station is no surprise

NEWS that Darlaston Police Station is closing for good has come as no surprise to local people. West Midlands Police will be saving £20,000 running costs and hope to sell the premises for £160,000.

Look what local people will be missing. The current 'high-tech' press the buzzer police answer service.

If you want to talk to local police come along and make use of this customer friendly service. It's cheap, available 24/7 and you may get an answer, as you stand outside in the cold or pouring rain. It's Darlaston police's version of speed dating.

You can buzz the button and you never know if you will get a policeman or woman or where they are from? The local anti-social youth and occasional drunk will miss their sport of buzzing their favourite tune on the one button xylophone. It must keep the police, wherever they are, entertained.

CLLR DOUG JAMES
Walsall

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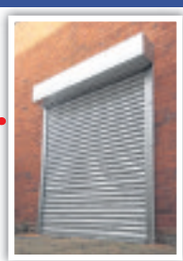

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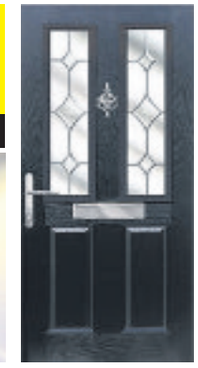

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Father and son on cue to reopen snooker hall

A FORMER customer has stepped in to reopen a popular snooker hall and bar after a five-figure refit.

The Q Lounge and Old Hall Snooker Club in Revival Street in Bloxwich were closed in June by MFA Bowl.

Bowling firm MFA Bowl ran an alley connected to the two, but closed that as well a month later.

Now retired builder Bernard Cavill, a former customer of the Q Lounge, has stepped in to reopen the bar and snooker hall. Scores of members have already signed up.

Mr Cavill, 72, said: "We used to go into Q Lounge for a drink and a lot of people in Bloxwich used to do the same. When it closed people were upset because they had nowhere to go for their age group. It got run down and then closed down.

Bang

"So we took it over and have taken a new lease out. It's been refurbished and a lot of the old regulars have come back. We've already got 80 members at the snooker hall.

"We expected it to be successful but thought it might take a couple of months to be built back up. But it's come back with a bang."

Mr Cavill, who used to run Cavill Homes, will run the two places with his son Lee. The pair have also appointed a manager to oversee the venues day-to-day.

The makeover included the creation of a new ceiling, while the snooker hall has got four new tables.

The Q Lounge will be open from Thursday to Sunday from 7pm to midnight. The snooker hall will open from 10am to 11pm, seven days a week.

Bernard Cavill with his son Lee at te reopened snooker hall

Out of this world visit

PRIMARY school children took an inter-galactic trip into outer-space to search for extraterrestrial life.

More than 150 pupils from Pinfold, Salisbury and Kings Hill Primary Schools in Wednesbury embarked on the epic journey of discovery.

Children stepped into the Stardome at Grace Academy Darlaston and were transported to other galaxies in the search for life elsewhere in the universe. Using a Hubble Deep field image, along with a bespoke film projected onto the walls of the Stardome, pupils learned about what was needed to support life and explored where such conditions might be found.

The initiative was brought to the school by Keele University.

Tracey Grainger from Kings Hill Primary, said: "I thought it was an amazing experience for the children."

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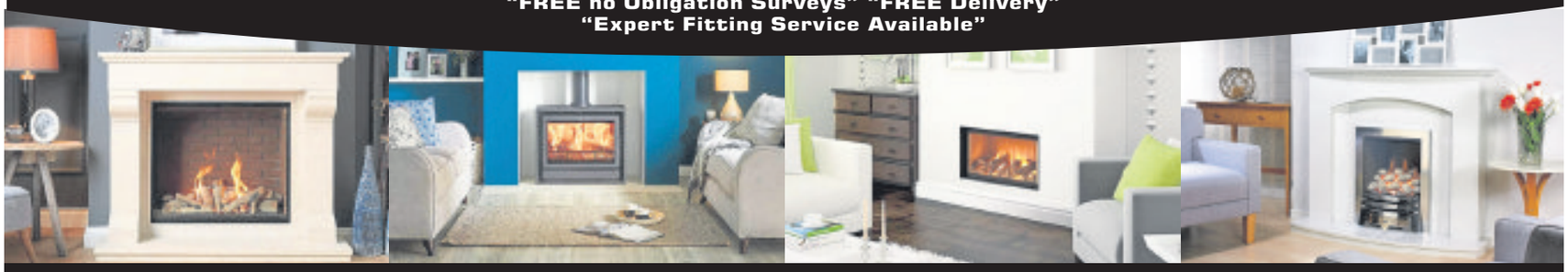

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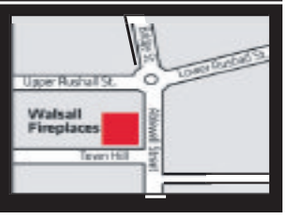

Mother: Tunisia still not ready for tourists

A MOTHER who lost three family members in a terror attack in Tunisia says she is 'yet to be convinced' it is a safer place.

Thomas Cook has resumed flights to the country and British holidaymakers were flown out there last week the first time since 38 people were slaughtered by an IS-inspired gunman in 2015.

But Suzy Evans, from Wednesbury, who lost her son Joel, brother Adrian Evans and father Patrick Evans in the attack, said she was 'surprised' the airline had re-started flights to the north African nation when the terror threat was still considered to be high.

She urged tourists to get as much information as possible before heading there.

Patrick, Joel and Adrian

The hotel and beach attack scene

Think twice before flying – Joel's mother Suzy Evans with her son Owen

Talented

Terrified holidaymakers fled as Seifeddine Rezgui fired indiscriminately on the beach in Sousse and followed into the hotel.

Thirty Britons were killed, including talented football referee Joel, 19, his grandfather Patrick, 78, and uncle Adrian, 44, a Sandwell Council worker from Bilston.

The hotel where the three family members were killed re-opened with a new name last year.

Despite assurances hotel security has been tightened, Miss Evans said she felt uncomfortable with the idea of tourists heading back to the beaches. She said: "I just hope people are going to read all the facts about the country.

"At the end of the day, people make their own decisions on whether they feel safe going on holiday but they just need to be aware of the full facts.

"At the moment, Tunisia is still in a state of emergency and the Foreign Office also says terrorists are very likely to carry out a terrorist attack. More importantly, the Tunisian trial still hasn't taken place."

And she said she was yet to be convinced that Tunisian hotels were safe from the threat of terror.

"Personally, I don't think Tunisia is ready but customers have to make their own decisions and weigh it up," she said.

Miss Evans added: "I am surprised they are offering flights to a destination where 38 people were slaughtered on the beach. I'm shocked people are going."

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Sleeper factory plan comes under scrutiny

A DEBATE over the proposed Bescot railway sleeper factory will be held at a full council meeting next month.

A petition against the plans to create 600,000 railway sleepers a year gathered more than 3,800 signatures, online and on paper.

Sandwell Council will debate the proposals on March 6.

Campaigners will also hold a peaceful protest outside Sandwell Council House on Freeth Street, Oldbury, before the debate.

The development by Network Rail has met with concerns over air, light pollution and traffic along with the appearance of the plant.

Backyard

Campaigner Jenny Lloyd said: "It is not just a 'not in my backyard scenario', there are genuine reasons.

"I reckon the petition will be 4,000-strong by the time we go to the meeting."

Ward councillor Simon Hackett said: "This is an opportunity to take their opposition to the development to all 72 councillors across Sandwell and have their voices heard."

The site sits directly alongside the M6 southbound just south of Junction 9. Residents packed into a consultation event held by Network Rail when unveiled early designs for the compound, which they want to construct at the Bescot railway sidings in Friar Park.

RAIL.ONE, which will operate the site, stated the factory would replace the one in Washwood Heath, Birmingham, which is to be demolished to make way for HS2.

It would produce 600,000 concrete sleepers a year with the first rolling off the line as early as August 2019.

Concerns have been raised over the potential factory site

2022 Games director sought

A PROJECT director earning up to £120,000 is wanted to oversee preparations for the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

The city council is advertising for the role, which will involve leading planning for the major sporting competition.

The role is described as the 'most exciting international opportunity for the city for many years' and will involve heading up 'a huge cultural programme and a business expo designed to show off the skills and industry of the whole region'. It will pay between £97,263 and £119,148.

Birmingham was named as the host city for the 2022 Games in December. Part of the competition will take place in the Black Country, with swimming and diving to be held at a brand new aquatics centre in Smethwick.

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Film looks at problems of mental health

COLLEGE students have helped film a series of videos to raise awareness of mental health. Walsall College's Performing Arts and Creative Media students teamed up with civil engineering specialist Barhale.

The project was part of the Engineering Better Mental Health Management day, which helps construction and engineering managers understand the symptoms of mental health problems.

Students helped Barhale to film six mental health scenarios, which included people displaying symptoms of depression or anxiety. Level three performing arts students performed a number of scenarios depicting employees having issues at work, whilst the college's creative media students filmed the scenes.

For details about enrolling on a course at Walsall College, please call 01922 657000.

Living in fear after crime spree

CRIME-PLAGUED shopkeepers and business owners have told how they are living in fear of when the next raid will be after a spate of overnight burglaries.

Cafes, a dessert shop and off licences across Walsall have all been targeted by raiders in recent weeks.

The Tea Pot Cafe and J & S General Stores, both in Green Lane, as well as Creams Gelato on Walsall Waterfront are among the businesses to be affected.

The Greedy Pig Cafe in Gipsy Lane, Willenhall has also been hit.

Sisters Jenny Carver and Paula Shaw, who run the Tea Pot Cafe, have seen their family-run cafe broken into for a third time in four months.

In the most recent attack on February 9, crooks broke through the back door and stole £250 worth of stock.

Paula Shaw and Jenny Carver

Greedy Pig cafe owner Keith Mills

A crowbar was left at the scene and a meat cleaver was left the time before that – causing them concern for their welfare. Mrs Carver, aged 44, from Willenhall, and Mrs Shaw, 48, from Walsall, bought the cafe from their parents 16 years ago and have never had any problems until now.

Mrs Carver said: "It's had a massive effect on us we can't run our business how we want to. We work six days a week and work damm hard we now have to load all the stock into our cars at night so nothing is left on the premises we have no money to restock the cafe back up fully and we both just feel like giving up with it all."

It has forced them to pump thousands of pounds into repairing the shutters, front door and back door which was hit twice.

The Greedy Pig Cafe in Gipsy Lane, Willenhall, has had to fork out more than £1,000 for repairs after it was raided on Sunday, February 11.

Thieves used a car jack to break the shutters at the rear of the building before smashing through the window of Nell's function room. It's the second time owner Keith Mills has been targeted. The 50-year-old, from Walsall, came into work to find his business had been ransacked. "It happened on Sunday night into early Monday morning.

"My tills were everywhere and they'd ransacked the place.

"They had about £300 of spirits which I've had to replace but the repairs have cost the most. The damage they've done has cost up to about £900."

Meanwhile new dessert parlour Creams Gelato, was hit back on February 3 – just six days before – when thieves broke through the front window, leaving with a whole safe and money from the tills. Manager Bobby Nagra, from Telford, said the business, which opened just before Christmas, is one of several to been hit nearby, including Subway and Bella Italia.

"We had recently installed a safe which was bound to the floor. The whole thing was clearly an organised job – they were straight in and straight out and knew what they were going in for."

West Midlands Police said: "Anyone with information should call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111." Any information may result in a reward.

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Police stations face axe in force bid to save £5m

TWENTY-FOUR police stations are to be axed under plans by West Midlands Police in a bid to save £5 million.

Among those earmarked for closure are Aldridge and Wednesbury, as well as Wednesfield, Sedgley and Prouds Lane in Bilston.

Stations in Tipton, Smethwick and Oldbury will also be released from the force's estate as part of the plan unveiled by the force.

It comes two years after Walsall's Green Lane Police Station closed its doors.

None of the stations set to close in the Black Country are currently open to the public, with most shutting their counters three years ago.

Aldridge Police Station, in Anchor Parade, is facing the axe

Wednesbury Police Station is also earmarked for closure

Bases

The proposal is yet to be finalised, but will see the force share more buildings with West Midlands Fire Service.

Officers already work from Hadens Cross Fire Station in Cradley Heath, following the closure of Old Hill Police Station. Further plans to share bases with councils and the NHS are also being looked at by police chiefs.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) David Jamieson is behind the move, which comes at a time when recorded crime in the region has risen 14 per cent.

He said the money saved would go towards protecting the jobs of police officers. The number of officers will already drop by 78 to 6,450 next year.

Mr Jamieson said: "After £145m cuts since 2010 with the level of funding from government being squeezed year on year, I am having to find efficiencies to protect officer numbers.

"The £5m annual savings proposed in this strategy will help protect 100 police officer posts," he added.

The move will leave 16 police bases in the Black Country – seven in Dudley, four in Walsall, four in Wolverhampton, and just one in Sandwell.

Wednesbury Police Station, which is in Holyhead Road, and Aldridge Police Station, in Anchor Parade, closed to members of the public three years ago. Mr Jamieson said he wants the stations to help areas tackle the housing crisis, and unemployment.

The proposed closures were set to be debated at a meeting of the PCCs strategic policing and crime board this week. A decision will then be made by members next month.

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Trendy Fiat models are targeted by car thieves

THIEVES are targeting souped-up version of a trendy modern classic – the Fiat Abarth 595.

Nine of the vehicles, a performance model of the Fiat 500 and priced from £17,000, were stolen in the Black Country in January.

Another standard Fiat 500 was taken from a property in Stafford. Many victims said their vehicles were taken without keys or smashed glass.

Police recently highlighted the use of relay devices that push signals from electronic car keys to vehicles parked outside. Thieves have made use of the high-tech gadgets to steal valuable cars without having to force entry.

West Midlands Police confirmed nine Abarths 595s had been stolen in the Black Country in the first month of this year.

Nine Abarths were stolen in January

Steve and Denise Scotts, of Stafford

Simone and David Beebee, of Wednesbury, had their Fiat 595 Abarth stolen

Appeal

They were taken in Walsall, Oldbury, Halesowen, Smethwick, Stourbridge, Brierley Hill, Tipton, Dudley and Wednesbury.

Simon Williams, spokesman for the RAC Foundation, said the appeal of the high-powered Abarth 595 may mean criminals were stealing them to order. He said: "Owners need to take extra precautions, while police need to clamp down on vehicle thefts."

Dave and Simone Beebee had their navy blue Abarth stolen from their driveway in Ellway Street in Wednesbury in the early hours of January 29.

The vehicle was bought only two months earlier from an Arnold Clark dealership in Oldbury and had just over 500 miles on the clock.

When it was stolen the keys were still inside their house. Mr Beebee said: "It all seems too much of a coincidence."

Kate Darke's vehicle was stolen from her address in Stourbridge Road in Dudley sometime between midnight on January 13 and midday the following day. It was recovered on January 28 and is undergoing forensic analysis. In December, Stephen and Denise Scotts, of Witney Road in Stafford, had their Fiat 500 stolen from their drive.

Justin Westnedge, from Abarth UK, said: "The Abarth 595 is being constantly upgraded for safety and security."

A West Midlands Police spokesman said the crimes were not thought to be linked. Call 101 with information.

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Metal fatigue led to air crash

A MICROLIGHT crash from which a pilot escaped with minor injuries has been blamed on 'metal fatigue'.

Dominic Whelan's plane rolled over when it lost control as the front wheel gave way on landing.

The crash, on July 2 last year, came just months after the pilot, from Willenhall, was slashed in the face with the plane's propeller.

The light aircraft was coming in to land at Otherton Airfield, near Penkridge, when the front wheel collapsed.

The Mercury microlight, was a wreck but Mr Whelan, a former RAF engineer, and his 15-year-old son Michael walked away relatively unscathed.

Pilot Dominic Whelan

An Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) report into the crash revealed the 42-year-old pilot, who had just 38 hours flying experience, touched down on the main wheels, but when the nose wheel made contact with the ground it collapsed.

An inspection of the wreckage uncovered a fatigue crack at the edge of a weld on the nose gear, which had failed under load during the landing.

The tiny aircraft then tipped on to its left side. Despite the pair escaping without major injuries, the AAIB said the damage to the microlight was 'significant'.

Months earlier, Mr Whelan was smashed in the face by the propeller.

Town centre bars to have knife arch security scanners

A 'KNIFE arch' is to be installed in pubs and nightclubs across Walsall to combat the steep increase in stabbings in the town.

Publicans reeling from the effect of rising knife crime have teamed up with West Midlands Police to bring a mobile metal-scanner to the town at weekends.

The American-style knife arches, similar to those used at airports and which are commonplace in many American high schools, will be used in Walsall for the first time on March 3, although the location will be kept under wraps. The mobile scanner will be moved round from venue to venue on successive weekends.

Reagan Asbury, 19, was stabbed in the neck at a boxing match at Walsall Town Hall in October, while student Rezwan Ali was killed at a house party in Chuckery last month and gym instructor James Brindley murdered in Aldrige last June.

Matthew Lemm, manager of Bar 10 on Walsall's waterfront, said pubs wanted to prevent further fatal stabbings iand restore public confidence in visiting the town at night.

Mr Lemm, aged 38, who also runs The Workers' Rest in Willenhall with partner Katie Butler, said: "As a father of two teenagers myself, I want to see the town centre become a safer place for their sakes and others like them.

"There's no escaping that these stabbings have had a knock-on effect on our livelihoods. These tragedies are a platform to do something positive."

Members of Walsall Pubwatch agreed to take part in the campaign.

Steel workers face uncertainty

MORE than 50 workers face an uncertain future as bosses of a Black Country factory mull a possible closure for the 90-year old steel business.

A 'long-term decline' in the market for the type of steel tubes made at Liberty Drawn Products and Liberty Fairbright Wire are behind the move.

Staff at the two firms in Phoenix Street, West Bromwich, have been told that management at the Liberty House-owned company was "reviewing operations", with closure among the options.

No decision has yet been made but, if the factory is shut, management say they will try to move jobs.

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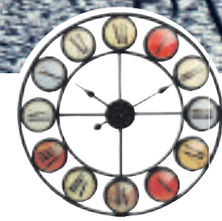

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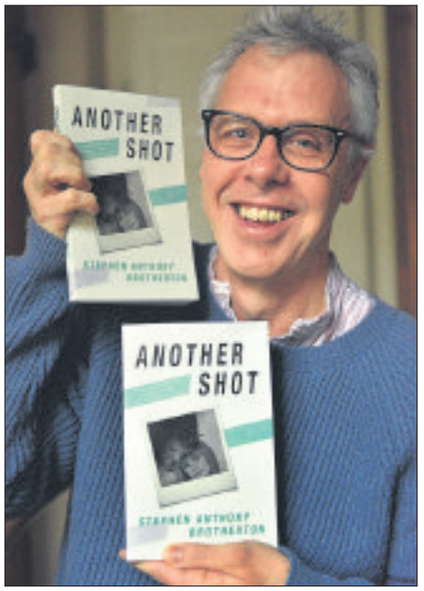

Simon Brotherton with a copy of his debut novel

A FIRST-time novelist from Walsall has been inspired by a romance from his youth for his debut publication.

Steve Brotherton, who grew up in Bloxwich, has received positive reviews for Another Shot, the story of Freddie and Jo-Jo, two old flames who are reunited in a coffee shop 35 years since their teenage romance ended.

The book is set in Walsall in the 1970s and early 1980s, with Jo-Jo and Freddie enjoying frequent nights out in Walsall.

Jo-Jo works as a Saturday girl at a hairdressers in Bloxwich, while Freddie is on a youth opportunities programme scheme at a timber yard in Walsall – all of which are autobiographical for 55-year-old Steve.

He said: "It's based loosely on a relationship I had when I was 18. It's not exactly the same in the reasons why we separated and there hasn't been any reunion.

"But it is based on my first love, the first proper relationship I was involved with."

The former Manor Farm Comprehensive student said he was already working on a follow-up work.

Soulful Jorja to headline in Second City

WALSALL singer Jorja Smith is set to bring her headline tour to Birmingham.

The 20-year-old up-and-comer Smith will play the O2 Academy on October 13. Tickets went on sale last Friday.

In her brief career so far, the rising star from Walsall has already worked with Canadian superstar Drake and performed at London's Royal Albert Hall.

This year, she released a new song featuring grime star Stormzy, which garnered more than two million views on YouTube.

She was nominated for three MOBO Awards, and this year won the BRIT Critics' Choice Award, the first independent artist to do so.

Walsall artist Jorja Smith

Cameo

Bizarrely, the former Aldridge School pupil also features in a Nike commercial involving 258 people from London, who all have pride in where they come from.

The 20-year-old makes a brief came appearance in the ad, called Nothing Beats A Londoner, which features the likes of Skepta, Mo Farah, Harry Kane and Dina Asher-Smith, who all hail from the capital.

Jorja's first release, Blue Lights, was uploaded to SoundCloud in January 2016 when she was 18 years old. The song samples hit single Sirens by hip hop artist Dizzee Rascal.

The vocalist followed this release with single A Prince, featuring Maverick Sabre, and Where Did I Go?, which rapper Drake chose as his 'favourite track of the moment' in an article featured in Entertainment Weekly.

The 20-year-old up-and-comer was also featured in the Top 100 in NME magazine, which lists the rising stars set to make it big in 2018.

Anti-terror chief facing axe over lost documents

A DISCIPLINARY panel has ruled the West Midlands' top counter-terrorism officer should be sacked for gross misconduct over the theft of top secret documents from his car.

The paperwork was stolen from the boot of Assistant Chief Constable Marcus Beale's car last May.

Mr Beale, 54, left the documents in a briefcase in his car boot while he visited the pub, went for a weekend away to London with his wife – leaving the car parked at Birmingham International train station – and went supermarket shopping.

Mr Beale was given the documents on May 10, and placed them in his car before noticing them missing five days later at a service station while en route to Oxford. There is even some suggestion that the car had been left unlocked.

ACC Marcus Beale

Chief Constable Dave Thompson

The car containing the documents was parked at Birmingham Airport

Organised

The briefcase contained four documents, including minutes from a high-level counter-terror meeting, counter-terrorism local profiles, details of regular organised crime and highly sensitive information about a high-profile investigation.

The loss of the paperwork, which has never been recovered, could have been 'catastrophic' according to a legal counsel for West Midlands Police.

The panel found Mr Beale had committed gross misconduct and recommended he be dismissed.

The final decision over what happens to Mr Beale, expected in March, now lies with West Midlands Chief Constable Dave Thompson.

Last year Mr Beale, aged 54, and due to retire in April, pleaded guilty to failing to safeguard information under the Official Secrets Act at magistrates court and was fined £3,500.

"The document should never have been in the briefcase of that car, not for minutes, let alone days, said Fiona Barton QC, counsel for West Midlands Police at the hearing held in Birmingham. "The impact of the loss could have been catastrophic. It is a matter of luck that the document does not appear to have seen the light of day."

Corinna Ferguson, chairman of the panel, said it was a mystery how and when the documents were taken.

John Beggs, counsel for Mr Beale, said his client was unaware of the sensitivity of the documents, saying he would have acted differently if he knew.

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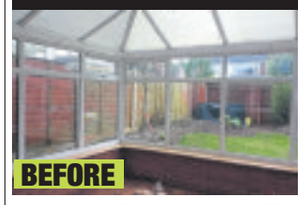

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Nunes murder case vow to get justice for family

A POLICE boss says he wants justice for the family of Kevin Nunes as he announced a review was to be carried out over the botched murder case.

The 22-year-old's bullet-ridden body was found in Pattingham, Staffordshire, 16 years ago – yet the case remains unsolved.

A previous investigation led to the murder convictions and jailing of five men. But those convictions were overturned after details over a key witness were not disclosed during the murder trial.

Staffordshire Police was criticised in an Independent Police Complaints Commission report for its handling of the case last year.

Impact

Now its Chief Constable, Gareth Morgan, said he hoped to redeem the lost trust in the force over the damning episode by solving the murder case.

He met the family last month, outlining his intention to review the case.

He said: "This [Kevin Nunes murder case} has had an impact on the trust and confidence from the public.

"I am determined to do something to resolve that – clearly bringing justice for an unsolved crime would go toward that."

The review will be carried out by another police force and is the first stage of a potential re-investigation of the case.

Staffordshire Police will hand over all evidence for examination to a specialist police team.

Mr Morgan said he expected to hear back by the summer about whether there would be scope to reopen the investigation. Asked why the review was being launched, he said: "Justice for the family – this murder case is never closed for the family and it is currently an unsolved murder.

"There is a need to bring justice and closure."

He added: "At this time a review has been agreed and we are now finalising arrangements with another force for this to commence in the near future."

Following Mr Nunes' death, five Black Country men – Adam Joof of Willenhall, Levi Walker of Birmingham, Antonio Christie of Great Bridge, and Owen Crooks and Michael Osbourne both of Wolverhampton – were given life sentences after being found guilty of the murder at Leicester Crown Court in 2008. Four years later the five men had their convictions quashed in the Court of Appeal, which revealed serious police failings and concerns over the case had not been disclosed at the original murder trial.

Detectives had drunk alcohol with the key witness, covered-up alleged crimes committed by the witness, and that they allegedly abused overtime to boost their pay.

One of the witness handlers was having an 'intimate affair' with the female officer in charge of overseeing evidence at the witness's 'safe house'.

No senior officers ever faced disciplinary proceedings.

Kevin Nunes, killed in 2002

Pledge – police chief Gareth Morgan

MP sees progress at development

Construction director Stephen Freer, Wendy Morton MP and site manager John Pendleton

MP Wendy Morton visited a new retirement village to see how work is progressing. The Brownhills and Aldridge MP met the constriction team at the development in High Street, Aldridge.

The project, being developed by Churchill Retirement Living, will feature 37 private, self-contained apartments for the over-60s once complete. It will also include a video-entry system, lift to all floors, a 24-hour care and support system as well as a lodge manager. Ms Morton said: "The development of new retirement properties is a significant addition to the housing provision here in Aldridge."

Stephen Freer, construction and commercial director at Churchill Retirement Living, said: "We have already seen lots of interest."

Clampdown on bedsits

COUNCIL chiefs are to launch a crackdown on bedsits – after a 'proliferation' sprung up across Walsall.

Bosses have said the bedsits, or houses of multiple occupation, can give rise to issues including crime and anti-social behaviour.

The authority's cabinet is now seeking tougher powers to prevent nore HMOs across the borough.

These powers would allow bosses more scrutiny over planning applications for the bedsits.

A council report says: "HMOs can be an attractive option for property owners who are unable to sell or let their properties in areas of market decline.

"The alternative to converting them to HMOs might be that dwellings are left vacant and derelict."

But it added: "Concerns have been raised about an apparent proliferation of HMOs in recent years in certain parts of the borough that are alleged to give rise to various issues around matters such as crime and anti-social behaviour, refuse storage and parking."

Walsall's Conservative group leader Mike Bird said: "Everyone knows we need housing and at the end of the day these provide a roof over people's head.

"But we have to make sure they are kept in good working order."

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From left, Cliff Easthope, Steve Furnival, Graham Page, and seated, Reg Smith from Bilston

We'll meet again as forces friendship passes test of time

A FRIENDSHIP formed six decades ago during National Service has stood the test of time.

The group was thrown together for eight weeks of training at Whittington Barracks back in 1958, and have never looked back, marking 60 years as pals with a meal out at the Broadway pub, Lichfield Road, New Invention.

Reg Smith, of Bilston, Graham Page, of Kingswinford, Cliff Easthope, of Tipton, and Steve Furnival, who lives in Stoke, were just 19 when they got to know each other.

They spent time in post-war Germany and then the Far East together.

Mr Easthope said: "We all first met up in February 1958 in Lichfield, that's where we started our training.

"I remember getting off the train from Tipton or Wolverhampton and Steve got off the train coming from Stoke.

"The sergeant shouted our names out and we got onto a lorry together and we've been mates ever since. I wouldn't have changed it for anything. And I think everyone would say that it helped them in life."

After nearly two months of training, the four pals joined up with the South Staffordshire Regiment's First Battalion proper – Mr Easthope and Mr Furnival in A Company and Mr Page and Mr Smith in C Company.

Stationed

They travelled to Germany and were stationed in Luneburg until October before returning home. However, on their return in late 1958 the North and South Staffs Regiments amalgamated to become the Staffordshire Regiment.

The new combined regiment consisted of active soldiers only so those doing National Service were forced to move to another unit. Needing to serve another year to complete their training, the quartet were transferred to the Cheshire Regiment, and sent to the Far East.

They spent around a year in Singapore and Malaya – helping keep the peace during elections in the former which saw Singapore vote to self-govern for the first time.

Retired odd job man Mr Smith, 79, said: "It's good looking back, but you never realised at the time how good a time it was. It definitely shaped me for the rest of my life."

Mr Furnival, also 79, worked as a primary school teacher for 20 years before his retirement. He said: "I remember the first day well. We pulled into Lichfield Trent Valley station and the first bloke I met was Cliff, and he helped me get onto the truck.

"Training was normally six weeks but we did eight weeks because there was a short break for Easter."

Mr Furnival left as a full corporal, and his colleagues all Privates. The four have remained close and have travelled abroad with their wives who are also now friends.

Mr Easthope said: "We try and meet up at weekends and have been on holiday together. All our wives get on well together."

Cliff, third left, Reg, fourth left, and Graham, second from right

Reg Smith is in the middle in this shot taken in Singapore in 1959

Reg Smith, right, during his time in Singapore in 1959

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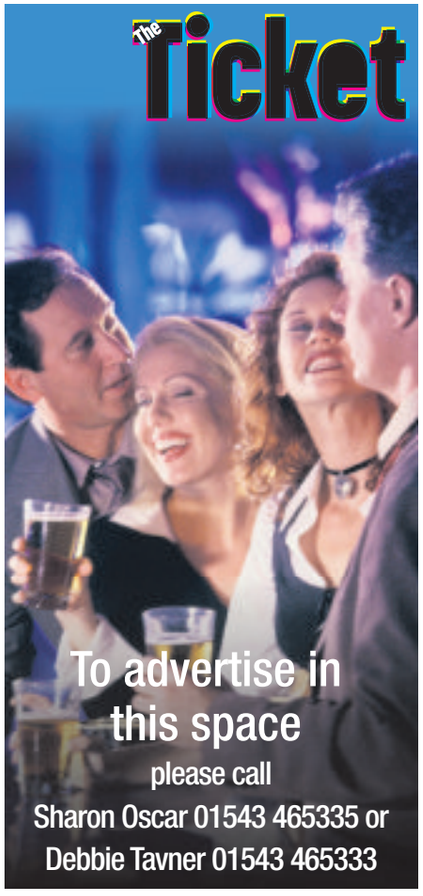

X Factor's Brenda is nicest star in town

She's not in the least sniffy about her X Factory past. Brenda Edwards is thrilled that her ITV success helped catapult her into the world of entertainment – so that she still gets great roles now, though it's a dozen years since her appearance on the second series of the show, back in 2005.

Brenda's life changed forever when she entered The X Factor in 2005. She was the last woman standing in the semi-finals and left the audience and judges spellbound week after week before signing up for a 27-date X Factor UK arena tour.

The ultimate acceptance by the public came when Brenda was presented with the Screen Nation Award in 2007 for Favourite Reality TV Star, which was a people's choice award.

In 2006, Brenda was snapped up to play Mama Morton in Chicago the Musical in the West End. She received such great acclaim for her portrayal of the prison warden that she was asked back to play the role again after appearing in the 10th anniversary gala performance.

In 2007, Brenda created the role of Pearl Pastor in Carmen Jones at the Royal Festival Hall, performing with both the London and Royal Philharmonic orchestras.

"It's been an interesting ride," she says, a master of understatement.

She's on the road now with Hairspray, calling in at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre from Monday to March 3.

"It's an amazing feeling to be part of the show. It's a great cast. It's nice to have fun and everybody is so supportive. That's what's needed when you're on the road and away from your family at home. It's nice that we all get on and we have fun."

The action in Hairspray is set in Baltimore in 1962 where Tracy Turnblad, a big girl with big hair and an even bigger heart, is on a mission to follow her dreams and dance her way onto national TV. Tracy's audition makes her a local star and soon she is using her new-found fame to fight for equality, bagging local heartthrob Link Larkin along the way. The show features the hit songs Welcome To The 60s, You Can't Stop The Beat, The Nicest Kids in Town and many more.

Brenda says: "It's an amazing feel-good show, but the things we're talking about are anything but feel-good. It was a time of racism and oppression but the musical doesn't shove that down your throat.

"There's an underlying message there which is serious and poignant, whether it's to do with sexism, ageism, religion or anything else. There is no other musical that covers so many topics.

"I've wanted to play this part for a long time. I auditioned for the West End, but I wasn't ready at the time because I was fresh from The X Factor. I wasn't successful then but it meant that I could go away and grow and come back with a real understanding of how to play the character. I hope I've achieved that.

"It's such a great role. She's very similar to me. I identify with her. The way she speaks her mind and she's a fighter and a strong lady. She has some amazing songs. I'm very lucky to be playing her."

She is respectful of the way The X Factor changed her career. It gave her a platform and she's used that to keep moving forward. "I didn't even know what I was looking to get out of it. I didn't think I'd win it or get as far as the live shows, to be honest. Having gone on the show and been in that bubble – and that's what it is – it's easy to be confused once you come out because you are just shielded from the outside world.

"It's only when you come out and are on your own that you have to have this strong determination to put it behind you and decide where to go next. I just kept singing in clubs and doing lots of gigs.

"I was in it for 11 weeks until the semi finals. I do believe I was one of the lucky ones. But you make your own luck and destiny. I wasn't put straight in for Chicago. I had to audition and I had five auditions for one role. It was very daunting. That was more frightening for me than my X Factor auditions."

Away from the stage, Brenda has faced battles of her own after being diagnosed with breast cancer. She made the brave decision to go public about that in the hope that her victory against the disease might inspire others.

Welcome to the 60s – Brenda Edwards in Hairspray

Sexism, ageism, religion – no other musical covers so many topics

"I didn't hide the breast cancer away because I wanted to be somebody that could try to help somebody else out there. That's why I came out there. I was aware that people would see me as someone in the public eye. I wanted to raise awareness for the cancer. I went through it when I was on the Hairspray tour the last time. That's another reason why I wanted to come back this time. It was such a strong network of support for me.

"I felt my breast and it turned out it was that. I caught it early and had chemo and it's not nice, it's horrible, I have side effects but I'm alive. I am thankful every single day. That's what makes me want to do this show. You don't know when your time will be up. I want to spread the joy and happiness. I want to help others. I want to empower others."

Andy Richardson

● **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

Stereophonics – tenth album

Have a nice St David's Day with Stereophonics

ST DAVID'S Day will certainly have a Welsh flavour at Birmingham Genting Arena on Thursday (March 1) with Stereophonics in concert.

One of Britain's best live bands, the group formed in the South Wales village of Cwmaman 26 years ago and come to the venue toting their tenth studio album Scream Above The Sounds, follow up to 2015 chart-topper Keep The Village Alive.

Featuring singles Caught By The Wind and All In One Night, Scream Above The Sounds was primarily recorded at the band's west London HQ with the help of regular collaborator Jim Lowe. Frontman Kelly Jones says he aimed to write 'big anthemic songs', adding: "Every song offers a sense of release. Even when there's nostalgia, fear or anxiety, they're still all offering hope and room to manoeuvre."

Stereophonics consist of founders Kelly Jones (vocals/guitar) and Richard Jones (bass) along with Adam Zindani (guitar) and Jamie Morrison (drums). Keyboardist Tony Kirkham joins the band for live shows. Birmingham-born Zindani, former lead singer and guitarist with Brum band Casino, has been with Stereophonics for 11 years now. Morrison, from Huntingdon, previously played with Noisettes.

Stereophonics have been touring the globe and were one of the most regular performers at the V Festival. Their most popular tracks in a career that stretches back to 1997 debut Word Gets Around include Just Looking, Have A Nice Day, Madame Helga, Maybe Tomorrow, Dakota and C'est la Vie.

Family history inspires comedian

He's the comedian best known for football banter with Frank Skinner but David Baddiel's latest show is all about his family.

Baddiel's relationship with Black Country legend Frank was built around their love of The Beautiful Game. They were the poster boys of Euro '96, had a huge hit with Three Lions (with help from The Lightning Seeds) and attracted massive audiences to their witty Fantasy Football show.

Both had been successful comics beforehand. University of Cambridge educated Baddiel had an earlier successful partnership with Rob Newman, the first comedians to sell out Wembley Arena, while Frank came from the school of hard knocks before teaching and then comedy, going from Midlands to national fame. They remain close friends.

David says: "We're an odd couple, Frank and I. I saw him yesterday, we communed about the death of Mark E Smith. He was such a big fan of The Fall. I knew he'd be upset so I went to see him, he lives in my road. We used to live together and when he moved out he bought a house two doors down. He's now bought a house 100 doors down. It's a very expensive form of stalking."

My Family: Not the Sitcom is at Birmingham New Alexandra Theatre on February 28, Dudley Town Hall on April 19 and Stafford Gatehouse on May 19.

"I look at the fact that my mother, who was born in Nazi Germany, escaped from the regime by the skin of her teeth. The mad way she lived her life might have been rooted in that. Something about my mother speaks to me about a woman who knew she nearly didn't have a life and so lived it as a punch in the face to the Nazis."

Low or high times with Morrissey

Gig of the week has to be Morrissey, pictured, at the Genting Arena on Tuesday, although the former Smiths frontman has become a divisive figure. Last year's Low In High School album got a mixed reaction. Other highlights include The Blockheads with Derek 'The Draw' Hussey at the mic for the late Ian Dury at Bilston's Robin 2 tomorrow (Friday). Liverpool's All We Are are back with the excellent Sunny Hills album and a gig at the Hare and Hounds, Kings Heath, next Thursday.

Top comedy talent at Hippodrome gala

There's a funny couple of weeks ahead at Birmingham Hippodrome with lots of top comedians visiting.

There is a charity night on Wednesday with Luisa Omielan's Dead Funny Birmingham's Big Comedy Gala. Luisa from What Would Beyoncé Do?!, Comic Relief, Live at the Apollo and Thigh Gap! presents the coolest comics on the circuit for a one night bonanza. Confirmed guests include Sara Pascoe, Mo Gilligan, Iain Stirling, Tom Allen, Suzi Ruffell, Ellie Taylor, Tez Ilyas, Jen Brister, Aaron Twitchen and Dan Nightingale. All proceeds go to Helena's Hospice Foundation supporting hospices in the Midlands and nationwide.

Other laughter makers with shows at the Hippodrome include Sean Lock on Tuesday and Dara O'Briain for three consecutive nights from Thursday, March 1.

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SATURDAY'S TV FEBRUARY 24

CHOICE

Ant & Dec

Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway
(ITV, 7pm)
New series. The entertainer duo return with their regular weekend variety show, featuring audience surprises, outlandish stunts and celebrity guests. Kylie Minogue gets proceedings under way by opening the show with a studio performance, and Olly Murs swaps his rotating chair on The Voice for a seat in the announcer's booth. Amanda Holden becomes the first famous face to fall victim to the pair's latest round of Undercover pranks, and Stephen Mulhern is back to preside over another Ant Versus Dec contest, this time featuring monster trucks. Plus, Scarlett Moffat returns to Takeaway for more extravagant challenges, and the boys launch the show's biggest-ever Place on the Plane giveaway.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage from day 15 in PyeongChang, South Korea. **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage from day 15 in PyeongChang, South Korea. **4.00** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Scotland v England (Kick-off 4.45pm).

7.00 BBC News.
7.10 Regional Programme.
7.15 All Together Now. More amateur and professional singers hope to impress "the 100" as they take to the stage in the singalong challenge, competing for the two remaining spots in the Grand Final. This time, one of the acts dares a cover of judge Geri Horner's biggest hit, It's Raining Men, while others opt for Ed Sheeran's Galway Girl, Wet Wet Wet's Goodnight Girl, and Ain't Nobody by Chaka Khan. Rob Beckett presides over the proceedings.
8.20 Casualty. Ethan becomes preoccupied with solving the ED's budget problems, compromising patient care in the process. Meanwhile, Glen makes a decidedly unromantic proposal to Robyn.
9.10 Troy: Fall of a City. Helen and Paris reach Troy, and discover news of their illicit elopement has arrived ahead of them. Rulers Priam and Hecuba engage in an agonising debate over whether to send Helen back to her husband, or face the consequences of defiance. Meanwhile, in Sparta, Menelaus and his brother Agamemnon marshal the Greek forces in preparation of an invasion of Troy. Notable in his absence is Odysseus, king of Ithaca, but is he really as ill as he claims to be? Historical epic, starring Louis Hunter.
10.10 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.
10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches.
11.55 Live Winter Olympics 2018. Radzi Chinyanganya presents coverage of the opening events on day 16 in PyeongChang, South Korea, which includes curling, bobsleigh, and ice hockey.
3.30 Live Winter Olympics 2018. Continued coverage from day 16 in PyeongChang, South Korea.

BBC2

6.00 Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage of day 15 from PyeongChang, South Korea. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Hairy Bikers' Comfort Food. (R) **12.00** Live Winter Olympics 2018. Continued coverage from day 15 in PyeongChang, South Korea. **1.15** Escape to the Country. **2.00** Italy's Invisible Cities. (R) **3.00** Nigel Slater's Middle East. (R) **4.00** Trust Me, I'm a Doctor. (R) **4.30** Final Score. **5.30** Tom Kerridge: Lose Weight for Good. (R)
6.00 Hugh's Wild West. Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall extensive wildlife tour continues as he visits Dorset, where the mild climate has provided all kinds of creatures with ideal habitat conditions. He meets retired policeman Mick Jenner, who has been filming an otter family for the past few years, and local bat enthusiast Colin Morris, who has been keeping a watchful eye on the rare Bechstein bat. Plus, at Portland Bird Observatory, Hugh joins ornithologist Martin Cade in monitoring migrating blackcaps and wheatears.
7.00 Winter Olympics – Today at the Games. Clare Balding presents highlights of the 15th day's action in PyeongChang, South Korea, which included snowboarding, alpine skiing, and four-man bobsleigh.
8.00 David Attenborough's Natural Curiosities. Footage of animals that have unusual means of finding their way around, including dung beetles that navigate by the sun and moon and pigeons with remarkable memories.
8.30 Dad's Army. Mainwaring seizes the chance to contribute to the war effort by guarding a captured German U-boat crew. Guest starring Philip Madoc. (R)
9.00 Judi Dench: All the World's Her Stage. Billy Connolly, Samantha Bond, Daniel Craig and Ian McKellen are among those reminiscing about the veteran actress in this celebration of her 60-year career. (R)
10.00 Film: Philomena. (2013) A disillusioned political journalist helps a woman find the child that was forcibly taken from her in the 1950s. Fact-based drama, with Judi Dench and Steve Coogan.
11.30 Film: Strawberry Fields. (2012) Drama, starring Anna Madeley.
12.55 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.00** BBC News.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution. **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Bagel and Becky Show. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Be Cool, Scooby-Doo! (R) **9.05** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** James Martin's Saturday Morning. **11.25** Dancing on Ice. (R) **1.20** ITV News; Weather. **1.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Ireland v Wales (Kick-off 2.15pm). **4.30** ITV News; Weather. **4.50** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.00** The Chase. (R)
6.00 Take Me Out: 10th Anniversary Special. A special edition of the matchmaking show, in which Paddy McGuinness switches the men and women around, with female celebrities seeking the approval of a panel of returning Romeos.
7.00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. New series. The entertainers return with their weekend variety show, featuring a show-opening performance by Kylie Minogue. Plus, Amanda Holden falls victim to an Undercover prank.
8.30 The Voice UK. The contest heats up as the teams assembled by Tom Jones, Will.i.am, Jennifer Hudson and Olly Murs enter the Battle phase. Here, the coaches are tasked with chipping away at their roster of would-be stars via head-to-head studio battles. Each of the coaches are given 'steals', which gives them a chance to save any of the acts knocked out by their rival coaches during the sing-offs. As the contest gets ever fiercer, Emma Willis will be on hand to congratulate the victors, and commiserate with their defeated rivals.
9.50 Through the Keyhole. Keith Lemon challenges Jonathan Ross, Melanie Sykes and Ashley Banjo to guess which celebrity abodes he has invaded this week. Last in the series.
10.45 ITV News; Weather.
11.05 Film: Lethal Weapon 4. (1998) Action adventure, starring Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.
1.30 Jackpot247. **3.00** Babushka. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.20 Mobil 1 The Grid. **6.45** 3rd Rock from the Sun. (R) **7.10** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** The King of Queens. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Frasier. (R) **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.25** Coast vs Country. (R) **3.25** A Place in the Sun. (R) **4.30** The Secret Life of the Zoo. (R) **5.35** The Supervet. (R)
6.30 Channel 4 News.
7.00 Penelope Keith's Coastal Villages. Penelope explores the seaside villages of Northumberland and the Scottish Borders. She finds out how architect Edwin Lutyens and garden designer Gertrude Jekyll designed a home on the exposed coastline of the island of Lindisfarne, and walks along the golden beach of Low Newton, before taking in the medieval village of Warkworth. Previously seen on More4.
8.00 Britain at Low Tide. Tori Herridge continues her mission to chart Britain's rich maritime history via state-of-the-art technology. This time, she visits Dorset, where she tells the story of the world's first aircraft carriers. The team also reveals the crucial role the Dorset coastline played in D-Day, and searches for a unique Iron Age monument that can only be seen – sometimes – for a few hours each year.
9.00 Film: The Take. (2016) Premiere. An American pickpocket in Paris accidentally steals some top secret information, and finds himself on the run from the CIA. The agent in charge of the investigation recruits the thief's help when he discovers a sinister conspiracy that threatens both of them. Action thriller, starring Idris Elba.
10.50 Film: Dredd. (2012) A law enforcer in a post-apocalyptic city must fight his way out of a tower block dominated by a ruthless crime lord. Sci-fi thriller, starring Karl Urban and Lena Headey.
12.35 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **1.25** The Last Leg. (R) **2.20** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.25** Coast vs Country. (R) **5.20** Location, Location, Location. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.05** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Pets Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **3.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **4.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **5.00** Rich House, Poor House. (R)
6.00 The Wonderful World of Puppies. The documentary series continues, highlighting how newborn pups' simple desire for sustenance from their mother evolves into a more complex set of emotions, covering everything from relationships with litter-mates to their bond with humans. Dexter the dalmatian cultivates a strong early attachment to his owner via massage sessions, while Loki the weimaraner discovers that – even though he may have been removed from his litter – a playful child can make for the perfect companion. (R)
7.00 Cruising with Jane McDonald. The singer sails the Danube on one of the most luxurious ships of its type, as she makes her first foray into the realms of the river cruise. (R)
8.00 Britannia: Secrets of the Royal Yacht. Part one of two. Rob Bell examines iconic ships that have played significant roles in Britain's maritime and cultural history, beginning with the Royal Yacht Britannia. (R)
8.55 5 News Weekend.
9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games, including Fulham v Wolverhampton Wanderers and Sheffield Wednesday v Aston Villa.
10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. Colin Murray introduces all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including Wigan Athletic v Rochdale and Charlton Athletic v Shrewsbury Town.
10.30 Britain's Favourite Biscuit. Celebrities including Sally Lindsay and Joe Swash discuss beloved biscuits, before the nation's favourite is revealed via a survey's results. (R)
11.55 Cruising with Jane McDonald.
12.10 SuperCasino. **3.10** GPs: Behind Closed Doors. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 The Dark: Nature's Nighttime World **8.00** Winter Olympics Extra **9.00** Modus **10.30** Top of the Pops: 1985 **11.40** Annie Nightingale: Bird on the Wireless **12.40** Queens of Soul **1.40** Folk America on Later with Jools Holland **2.40** From Ice to Fire: The Incredible Science of Temperature **3.40** Close

ITV2
11.30 Take Me Out **1.05** Mr Bean **2.05** You've Been Framed! Gold **3.10 Film:** Babe (1995) **4.20** FYI Daily **4.25 Film:** Babe (1995) **5.00 Film:** Nanny McPhee (2005) **6.00** FYI Daily **6.05 Film:** Nanny McPhee (2005) **7.05 Film:** The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (2014) **8.10** FYI Daily **8.15 Film:** The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (2014) **9.50** Survival of the Fittest **10.50** Family Guy **11.50** American Dad! **12.45** The Cleveland Show **1.40** Ibiza Weekender **2.35** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
1.25 Film: Columbo: The Most Dangerous Match (1973) **3.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **5.00** The Durrells **7.05** Midsomer Murders **11.00** Lewis **1.05** The Good Karma Hospital **1.55** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.25 Fishing Impossible **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Kempton. Coverage of today's race meetings at Kempton Park, Lingfield Park and Newcastle. **4.00 Film:** The Train Robbers (1973) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05 Film:** The Train Robbers (1973) **5.55** Storage Wars **6.25** World Cup Rivalries: England v Argentina **6.45** Live Snooker: World Grand Prix. The second semi-final. **11.15 Film:** High Plains Drifter (1973) **12.20** FYI Daily **12.25 Film:** High Plains Drifter (1973) **1.30** The Professionals **2.25** Counting Cars **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
12.35 The Big Bang Theory **7.15 Film:** Men in Black II (2002) **9.00 Film:** The Heat (2013) **11.20** Gogglebox **12.25** Naked Attraction **1.30** Celebs Go Dating **4.20** How I Met Your Mother **5.05** Rude(ish) Tube

Film4
11.00 Napoleon Dynamite (2004) **1.00** Ice Age: The Meltdown (2006) **2.45** Gulliver's Travels (2010) **4.25** The Family Stone (2005) **6.35** The Three Musketeers (2011) **9.00** Aliens: Special Edition (1986) **12.00** American Mary (2012) **2.05** The Bling Ring (2013) **3.55** Close

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The King and I

The critically acclaimed production of Rodgers & Hammerstein's The King and I will be coming to the London Palladium this summer for a limited time only!

Set in the year 1862, East meets West in this musical as British schoolteacher Anna Leonowens travels to Siam to instruct the royal children. Two worlds collide, and in spite of her wit and strong will, there are many lessons awaiting Anna in this foreign land, and she is unprepared for the strong connection that will occur between her and the King.

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Terry Teachout, The Wall Street Journal

The Tina Turner Musical

Nobody ever did storming, stropping, gyrating rock goddess like Tina Turner, officially one of the best-selling female artists in history, whose rasping power vocal, tempestuous personal life and sheer survival instinct were just begging to be turned into a rock opera.

Well now it has been, in a show written by Olivier award-winning playwright Katori Hall and directed by the internationally acclaimed Phyllida Lloyd, and you can see it erupt onto the stage at London's Aldwych Theatre. With coach travel, hotel accommodation and free time in London, this isn't just a great deal – it's Simply the Best!

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Omega Holidays cannot be held responsible for the non-appearance of a particular actor/actress; no refunds will be given in this event. Whilst we always try to ensure that parties are seated together, very occasionally, it may be necessary for parties to be split. Couples are always seated together. Tours offered subject to availability. Errors and omissions excepted. Prices shown are per person, based on two people sharing a dbl/twin room. Single supplements apply.

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SUNDAY'S TV FEBRUARY 25

CHOICE

Tom Burke

Strike – Career of Evil (BBC1, 9pm)

Part one of a two-part adaptation of JK Rowling's detective novel, with Tom Burke returning for a third time as private eye Cormoran Strike. Robin receives a severed leg in the post, and Strike is soon on the trail of potential suspects - all of whom have personal vendettas against him. Matthew's jealousy threatens his relationship with Robin, especially when she and Strike go away overnight. Tom Burke, Holliday Grainger, Andrew Brooke, Ben Compton, Jessica Gunning, Matt King, Kerr Logan and Killian Scott star.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.30** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Wanted Down Under. **2.00** Money for Nothing. (R) **2.45** Get Away for Winter. **3.30** Songs of Praise. **4.05** Earth's Natural Wonders. (R) **5.05** Earth's Natural Wonders. (R)

6.05 BBC News.

6.20 Regional Programme.

6.30 Countryfile. Matt Baker and Helen Skelton present the show from Derbyshire, where they report on blood donation drop-ins for alpacas and a form of above ground potholing involving squeezing in and out of rocky tors. Tom Heap investigates illegal abattoirs and Adam Henson meets a North Wales farmer who uses a special kind of working dog to manage his livestock.

7.30 Hold the Sunset. Edith turns 70, and Phil and Roger try to outshine each other with their gifts, while Roger also plots to ruin his mother's new romance. Guest starring Joanna Scanlan and Anne Reid.

8.00 Call the Midwife. Barbara helps a pregnant mother-of-two whose husband has recently died, and is on hand to give her support when a further tragedy drives her and her children from their home. Lucille teaches a health and relationships class at the youth club, only to encounter a furious mother who objects to her daughter attending.

9.00 Strike – Career of Evil. Part one of a two-part adaptation of JK Rowling's detective novel. Strike investigates potential suspects when Robin receives a severed leg in the post. Starring Tom Burke.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman presents action from the only Premier League clash of the day, as Manchester United hosted Chelsea at Old Trafford.

11.15 Film: Point Break. (1991) An undercover FBI agent infiltrates a Californian surfing gang to investigate a spate of armed robberies. Kathryn Bigelow's thriller, starring Keanu Reeves.

1.10 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.15** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Live Winter Olympics 2018. Coverage of day 16 from PyeongChang, South Korea. **11.00** Live Winter Olympics 2018 Closing Ceremony. Clare Balding presents coverage from PyeongChang, South Korea. **2.00** Live Athletics: Glasgow Indoor Grand Prix. Coverage of the meeting from Emirates Arena. **5.30** Flog It! (R)

6.00 Back in Time for Tea. A family embarks on a time-travelling adventure to discover how a post-war revolution in food transformed the British way of life, sampling meals from 1918 to the present day. (R)

7.00 Winter Olympics – Today at the Games. Clare Balding presents highlights of the 16th and final day's action in PyeongChang, South Korea, which included the deciding heats of the four-man bobsleigh, the gold-medal match in the women's curling competition, plus the men's gold medal ice hockey encounter, and also the ladies 30km mass start biathlon event.

8.00 Top Gear. New series. Matt LeBlanc, Chris Harris and Rory Reid take a motorsports road trip across the Wild West. Back on the track, Rob Brydon is the Star in a Reasonably Fast Car.

9.00 Life And Death Row: The Mass Execution. An attorney tries to halt an execution on the basis that the condemned man did not get a fair trial 24 years previously, but the original prosecutor is still determined to see the sentence is carried out. The family of a prisoner claim that DNA testing will prove his innocence, and the daughter of the woman he is accused of killing hopes his death will allow her to move on.

10.15 The Mash Report. Nish Kumar and a cast of comedy correspondents present the satirical and surreal take on the week's news. (R)

10.45 Top Gear: Extra Gear. New series. Rory Reid is joined by guests Sabine Schmitz and John Hennessey for a celebration of V8 engines, and takes a ride in a Mk 1 GT40 with Le Mans champion Jackie Walker.

11.10 Cleverman.

12.00 Women's Six Nations Highlights. **12.30** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **1.30** Holby City. (R) **2.30** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution. **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go! (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Spy School. **9.05** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Love Your Garden. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** The Martin Lewis Money Show. (R) **11.30** The Voice UK. (R) **12.45** ITV News; Weather. **1.00** Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. (R) **2.30** What Would Your Kid Do? (R) **3.30** Tipping Point. (R) **4.30** ITV News; Weather. **4.50** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.00** The Chase: Celebrity Special. (R)

6.00 Dancing on Ice. Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby present fairytale week, as the remaining contestants perform fantastical routines to impress judges Christopher Dean, Jayne Torvill, Jason Gardiner and Ashley Banjo before the dreaded Skate-Off determines which couple will be leaving the show. Featuring a guest appearance from the cast of Disney on Ice.

8.00 Endeavour. The detective drama prequel takes inspiration from an episode from Oxford's real-life history, in which Nation of Islam preacher and civil rights campaigner Malcolm X was invited to speak at the Oxford Union in December 1964, less than two months before his assassination in New York. Here, Morse struggles to negotiate escalating social tensions as a protest at a hair salon exposes rapidly escalating racial unrest in the heart of the city. Meanwhile, a murder at an Army base threatens to unveil long-held secrets within the regiment.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.15 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, with Allegra Stratton. (R)

11.15 Six Nations Highlights. Action from the third round of the championship, featuring France v Italy at the Orange Velodrome, Ireland v Wales at the Aviva Stadium and Scotland v England at Twickenham.

12.10 100 Year Old Driving School. (R) **12.35** Marcella. (R) **1.25** Jackpot247. **3.00** Take on the Twisters. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) **1.30** Jamie's Quick & Easy Food. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.55 Film:** Tooth Fairy. (2010) Family comedy, starring Dwayne Johnson. **5.00 Film:** Ice Age: Continental Drift. (2012) Animated comedy sequel, with the voice of Ray Romano.

6.35 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Posh Pawn. James Constantinou is armed and dangerous in an army tank that a military vehicle enthusiast hopes to sell for £30,000 to fund the family trip of a lifetime, and brushes up on his history when he's presented with a Sultan's sword. Designer handbag expert Claudia Valentin meets a man-about-town who wants to upgrade his Hermes Birkin bag. (R)

8.00 Hannibal's Elephant Army: The New Evidence. Scientists search for traces of the Carthaginian general's journey across the Alps with an army that included 40,000 men, 9000 cavalry and 37 elephants, a challenge that involved traversing mountains, raging rivers and the territory of hostile tribes. New evidence found in the rocky soil of the mountain range offers clues to the specific details of the trek. Palaeobiologist Dr Tori Herridge reveals why elephants are surprisingly good at mountain climbing, while historian Dr Eve MacDonald examines the motivations that drove Hannibal to make his seemingly impossible journey.

9.00 Homeland. The espionage drama continues with Carrie's attempts to free the 200 members of the intelligence community imprisoned by the president after the attempt on her life. As Wellington protects Keane, O'Keefe continues to broadcast and Carrie makes a discovery. Claire Danes, Linus Roache and Elizabeth Marvel star.

10.10 Gogglebox. (R)

11.05 Film: Shutter Island. (2010) Mystery thriller, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Mark Ruffalo.

1.35 The World's Most Expensive Food. (R) **2.30** The Supervet. (R) **3.25** Four Rooms with Sarah Beeny. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.15** The Secret Life of Puppies. (R) **6.20** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.35** Mofy. (R) **6.40** Simon. (R) **6.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.50** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.05** Thomas & Friends. (R) **7.15** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.25** Blaze and the Monster Machines. **7.55** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.10** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.25** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.55** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.10** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.30** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.40** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.05** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.00** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.35 Film:** The Bridge at Remagen. (1969) **1.50 Film:** A Bridge Too Far. (1977) Fact-based Second World War drama, with Dirk Bogarde. **5.05 Film:** Where Eagles Dare. (1968) Second World War adventure, with Richard Burton and Clint Eastwood.

8.00 Carabao Cup Final: Highlights. Arsenal v Manchester City. Colin Murray presents extended action from the showpiece match, as Arsene Wenger's Gunners met Pep Guardiola's men at Wembley Stadium. Arsenal had only ever won this competition twice, with their most recent victory coming 25 years ago. City had lifted the cup four times, most recently in 2016 following a penalty-shootout victory over Liverpool.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Film: Trainwreck. (2015) Premiere. A journalist lives her life by her father's maxim that monogamy never works, and has spent her adult life enjoying freedom from commitment. When she is sent to interview a doctor, an attraction develops between them, and she begins to wonder if there might be something to be said for a stable relationship. Comedy, starring Amy Schumer, Bill Hader, Brie Larson and Tilda Swinton.

10.00 5 News Update.

10.05 Film: Trainwreck. (2015) Concluded.

11.35 Film: Sex Tape. (2014) A couple try to spice up their marriage by filming themselves having sex, but then have to stop anyone from seeing the footage. Comedy, with Cameron Diaz and Jason Segel.

1.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** Cowboy Builders. (R) **4.00** My Mum's Hotter Than Me! (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R) **5.10** Divine Designs. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 Only Connect **7.30** University Challenge **8.00** Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble **9.30 Film:** Clouds of Sils Maria (2014) **11.30** From Ice to Fire: The Incredible Science of Temperature **12.30** The Genius of Bert Jansch: Folk, Blues & Beyond **2.00** The Enigma of Nic Jones: Return of Britain's Lost Folk Hero **3.00** The Art of France **4.00** Close

ITV2

12.30 Mr Bean **1.35** The Voice UK **3.00 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **4.05** FYI Daily **4.10 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **4.55 Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **5.55** FYI Daily **6.00 Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **7.00 Film:** Legally Blonde (2001) **8.00** FYI Daily **8.05 Film:** Legally Blonde (2001) **9.00** Ibiza Weekender **10.00** Survival of the Fittest **11.00** Family Guy **12.25** American Dad! **1.25** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

11.35 Lewis **1.35** A Touch of Frost **3.50** The Durrells **6.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs **9.00** Tonight at the London Palladium **10.00 Film:** Captain Corelli's Mandolin (2001) **12.35** Life of Crime **1.30** Blue Murder **2.45** George and Mildred **4.05** Road to Avonlea **5.50** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4

11.35 Minder **12.45** Live Snooker: World Grand Prix. The opening session of the final. **5.15** Storage Wars **5.45** The Chase Celebrity Special **6.45** Live Snooker: World Grand Prix. The second session of the final. **11.15 Film:** A Dangerous Man (2010) **12.15** FYI Daily **12.20 Film:** A Dangerous Man (2010) **1.20** Minder **2.20** Counting Cars **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

11.05 Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **11.20** The Goldbergs **12.20 Film:** Stuart Little (1999) **2.00** The Goldbergs **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.00** Young Sheldon **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.00 Film:** Men in Black 3 (2012) **9.00** Celebs Go Dating **10.00** Naked Attraction **11.10** The Big Bang Theory **12.05** Gogglebox **1.10** Celebs Go Dating **2.15** Tattoo Fixers **3.05** Rude Tube **3.35** Hollyoaks

Film4

1.00 Cutthroat Island (1995) **3.35** Pride & Prejudice (2005) **6.10** Snow White & the Huntsman Interview Special **6.20** Snow White & the Huntsman (2012) **9.00** Alien 3 (1992) **11.15** Salt (2010) **1.15** Monsoon Wedding (2001) **3.35** Close

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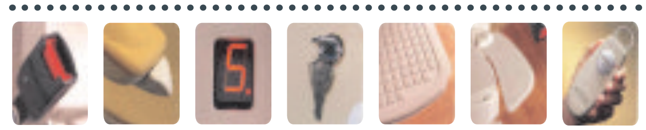

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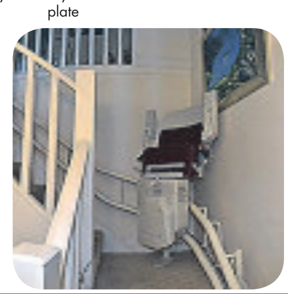

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PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Elysium, Channel 5, 11pm
In the future, most of the human race exists in poverty on a ruined Earth, while a wealthy elite live in luxury on an orbiting space station. A man dying of radiation poisoning fights security forces to gain access to the satellite and its medical facilities. Sci-fi thriller from the director of District 9, starring Matt Damon. (2013)

TUESDAY
Killer Collector, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Two women at an auction unwittingly purchase a storage locker belonging to a serial killer that contains evidence of his crimes. They soon find themselves in a desperate race to uncover the truth before the murderer tracks them down. Thriller, directed by and starring Casper Van Dien. (2015)

WEDNESDAY
Good, BBC1, 11.45pm
A literary professor in 1930s Germany finds his work praised by the fast-rising Nazi party, and begins to enjoy the privileges conferred by their acclaim. As his prosperity grows, he becomes increasingly morally compromised, and as the true nature of Nazi ideology becomes clear, he tries to protect his Jewish psychiatrist from the state. Drama, with Viggo Mortensen, Jason Isaacs and Jodie Whittaker. (2008)

Elysium, Monday, Channel 5, 11pm

THURSDAY
My Family's Secret, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A man attempts suicide, leaving a cryptic note claiming he may have caused his sister's death. His wife goes back to his home town in search of answers and asks his brother for help. She does not realise her brother-in-law has a split personality, and digging up the past brings out his more dangerous aspects. Thriller, starring Nicholle Tom. (2010)

FRIDAY
Blades of Glory, BBC1, 11.05pm
A bad-boy figure skater and his effeminate arch-enemy are banned from the sport after their intense rivalry results in a brawl. However, the pair find a loophole in the regulations allowing them to enter the world championships as the first ever same-sex pair. Comedy, starring Will Ferrell. (2007)

Mary serves up more tasty treats in her new series

You just can't keep a good woman down.

Mary Berry may be 82, an age when most people are concentrating on relaxing rather than reaching the peak of their career, but she's bigger and more popular than ever. And it's all down to one little programme - The Great British Bake Off.

She was already well known before it came along, but the show turned her into a household name. Of course, she's no longer associated with it, having decided not to stay with the series, as her fellow judge Paul Hollywood did, when it moved to Channel 4.

Her place was taken by Prue Leith, who has proved a worthy successor. She also has a cheeky side that allows Hollywood to be less serious than in previous runs – does that mean Berry prefers people to mind their Ps and Qs when she's around?

Perhaps so, but seeing as she's going solo these days, it no longer matters. No doubt she will continue to bring her homespun magic to us for some time to come; certainly the BBC hope she will.

"Mary is an extraordinary woman, loved and adored by the British public, and the BBC is her natural home," says the broadcaster's director of content, Charlotte Moore.

"I've been very lucky to have had the pleasure of working with Mary for many years and I'm so pleased that relationship will continue. She is an inspiration to generations, a real icon and I can't wait to cook up more unmissable shows with her in the future."

Berry is still keen on bringing her wisdom to as many people as possible – and it seems that, if she is attracted to a project, she will grab it with both hands. It's an approach she credits to a three-month spell she had in hospital after contracting polio as a child; she claims that being away from her family inspired her to make the most of every opportunity.

Berry turns turn 83 in March, an age when many people are slowing down and enjoying their retirement. Instead, she's heading back into the kitchen to reveal the best way to prepare some of her favourite meals.

"These are my wonderful brand-new recipes - timeless classics, simple British dishes and delicious, modern favourites to tempt family and friends," she explains. "With my trusted tips and techniques for quick, easy and foolproof cooking, in Classic I'll show you how to make the very best food in my own special, no-fuss way."

And unlike some TV chefs, she doesn't like to bombard viewers with ingredients they may never have heard of: "It's very important that the recipes work and contain ingredients that everybody can buy from supermarkets."

Amen to that!

On the menu during the run will be rack of lamb with orange and thyme sauce, a perfect loin of pork with apple sauce, lemon meringue pie and many, many more mouth-watering meals and treats.

Classic Mary Berry, Monday, BBC1, 8.30pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Electric Dreams: The Father Thing
Channel 4, 10pm
Eleven-year-old Charlie Cotrell must make the most difficult decisions imaginable to protect his mother and the human race when he is among the first to realise that the homes of everyone on Earth are being infiltrated by an insidious extra-terrestrial threat. The return after a break of the sci-fi anthology featuring stories based on the works of Philip K Dick, with this instalment based on 1954 short story The Father-Thing and starring Greg Kinnear, Mireille Enos and Shannon Brown.

TUESDAY
Secrets of the National Trust with Alan Titchmarsh
Channel 5, 8pm
With its awesome frontage ('more glass than wall') and six turrets, Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire was a wonder of its time. The magnificent 16th-century mansion is Alan's first destination in series two of the programme looking at some of Britain's historical homes and gardens. He hears how Hardwick was the fabulous home of Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury, commonly referred to as Bess of Hardwick, who rose to become the second most powerful woman in Tudor England, after Queen Elizabeth I. Meanwhile, Miriam O'Reilly visits nearby Stainsby Mill, which produced flour and bread for the residents, guests and staff of the estate and, also in the Peak District, Jenni Bond travels to Ecton Mines, a rich source of copper bought by Bess's descendants. Finally, Peter Purves visits Oxburgh Hall, a moated manor house in Norfolk which boasts needlework created by Bess and Mary, Queen of Scots.

WEDNESDAY
The World's Most Extraordinary Homes
BBC2, 8pm
New series. Award-winning architect Piers Taylor and actress and property enthusiast Caroline Quentin return to explore more extraordinary homes around the world. In the opening episode, the pair travel to Portugal, where they come across four very different properties. First, they visit a ultramodern house located in the Portuguese Riviera, before travelling to Penela, to view a property owned by British ex-pats Neil and Shirley. The pair then visit a house built within a pine forest near the Atlantic coast, before ending their journey around Portugal at a property hidden in the mountainous region of Peneda-Geres National Park.

THURSDAY
Serial Killer with Piers Morgan
ITV, 9pm
Piers Morgan has interviewed several convicted killers for his US-based documentaries, including Mark Riebe last year. His latest unsettling encounter is with Lorenzo Gilyard, who is also known as the Kansas City Strangler. For nearly two decades, beginning in 1977, he brought fear to the streets of Kansas City, Missouri, raping and murdering vulnerable women before discarding their bodies. It wasn't until 2003 that DNA evidence linked the victims to Gilyard, a seemingly happily married man who was respected at his job as a sanitation worker. He was tried for seven murders and found guilty of six of them, and is now serving consecutive life sentences with no chance of parole. He continues to protest his innocence and at first seems to have an answer for all of Morgan's question, but eventually he starts to run out of excuses.

Serial Killer with Piers Morgan, Thursday, ITV, 9pm

FRIDAY
Live Athletics
BBC2, 5.50pm
The World Indoor Championships. Coverage of the evening session on the second day of the competition, which takes place at Arena Birmingham. The women's 60m will come to a conclusion tonight with the running of both the semi-finals and final, and there will also be finals staged in the men's long jump and women's shot put, while the women's pentathlon will conclude with the long jump and 800m. Other notable events on the timetable are the opening round of the men's 800m and women's 1500m, in addition to the semi-finals of the women's and men's 400m.

The Yorkshire Steam Railway: All Aboard
Channel 5, 8pm
New series. Life on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, following an eventful week during which plans are made to welcome star steam engine Royal Scot to the heritage railway.

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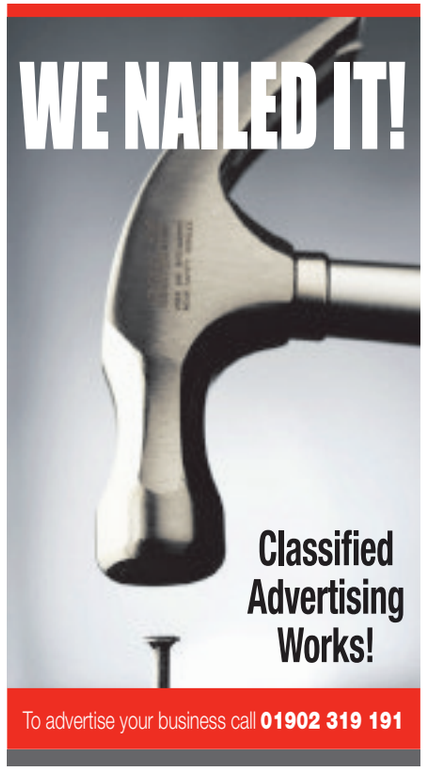

BRAIN GYM

No.468

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.

10	2	20	20	■	16	2	1	25	19	22	7	14
2	■	6	■	■	25	■	■	16	■	18	■	16
17	■	2	11	8	6	16	13	23	■	10	■	2
6	2	12	■	■	■	8	■	■	4	3	5	24
24	■	19	■	7	3	6	6	■	■	17	■	19
■	19	21	7	5	■	16	■	18	22	1	1	24
■	■	■	■	18	■	15	■	2	■	■	■	■
24	1	19	25	24	■	2	■	7	6	3	21	■
3	■	17	■	■	23	22	21	24	■	8	■	4
9	19	24	1	■	■	19	■	■	■	24	19	3
22	■	3	■	6	3	24	3	7	11	19	■	22 I
11	■	1	■	19	■	■	24	■	■	22	■	6 L
7	22	26	26	3	17	21	24	■	3	6	10	24

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6 L	19
7	20
8	21
9	22 I
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1 M	2 Y	3 D	4 I	5 C	6 J	7 G	8 A	9 T	10 H	11 P	12 Z	13 V
14 O	15 Q	16 X	17 U	18 F	19 W	20 K	21 E	22 L	23 B	24 S	25 N	26 R

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

1		2		■	3	4		5		6		7
	■		■	8	■		■		■		■	
9							■	10				
	■		■		■		■		■		■	
11												■
	■	■	■		■		■		■		■	12
13		14				■	15					
	■		■		■	16	■		■	■	■	
■	17									18		
19	■		■		■		■		■		■	
20					■	21						
	■		■		■		■		■		■	
22								■	23			

Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Fail to get a spinster (4)
3. The cards I can beat are a disadvantage (8)
9. Tells of bishops losing prominent leader (7)
10. The colour of whitebeam berries (5)
11. Although inexperienced with digits, they're useful in the nursery (5,7)
13. Letter offering plenty of lip (6)
15. Figurine of astute construction (6)
17. Girl all at sea for the first time? (6,6)
20. Put ring on arm or leg to show condition of neglect (5)
21. Uneasy with the others I have (7)
22. Offered to look after Eastern Communist (8)
23. Forsook political wing (4)

Down

1. Spoil one gilt flower (8)
2. Loves to find the answer (5)
4. Attack because to put to sea (6)
5. Dose given to animal to make it a puller of heavy loads (7,5)
6. A bar, etc. for entertainment (7)
7. Left harbour (4)
8. Shrub trained in tree form went up in quality (8,4)
12. Tear about always showing great respect (8)
14. Atom ban affected water transport operator (7)
16. Half-open plant supplies part of meal (6)
18. A team apart (5)
19. Uninteresting place to live (4)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Jealousy (4)
3. Rubbing (8)
9. Like fungus (7)
10. Disturb (5)
11. Tangle (12)
13. Ascends (6)
15. Squirm (6)
17. Esteem (12)
20. Concerning (5)
21. Unravel (7)
22. Constantly (8)
23. Colours (4)

Down

1. Effectiveness (8)
2. Poison (5)
4. Lessen (6)
5. Opposite numbers (12)
6. Briefly (2,5)
7. Observation (4)
8. Worked together (12)
12. Enthusiasm (8)
14. Ameliorate (7)
16. Existing (6)
18. Very coldly (5)
19. Overtake (4)

Sudoku

1				6	3			2
	7						4	
		8	4	7	9	1		
	5		6		7		1	
7				8				
	6		2		5		3	
		6	9	3	8	5		
	3						8	
4				2		3		9

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

7	9	2	4	8	3	6	1	5
5	4	8	2	1	6	3	9	7
6	3	1	9	7	5	8	2	4
1	8	3	7	9	2	5	4	6
9	5	6	3	4	8	1	7	2
4	2	7	5	6	1	9	8	3
3	7	5	1	2	9	4	6	8
2	6	9	8	3	4	7	5	1
8	1	4	6	5	7	2	3	9

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 6 Niblick; 7 Spent; 9 Actor; 10 Resided; 12 Stand to gain; 14 Legal action; 18 Besiege; 19 Adore; 21 Paint; 22 Setting. Down: 1 Cinch; 2 Almost; 3 Act; 4 Spring; 5 Inherit; 8 Testate; 11 Enlarge; 13 Several; 15 Aligns; 16 Oddity; 17 Crone; 20 Set. QUICK - Across: 6 Forlorn; 7 Vixen; 9 Prime; 10 Counsel; 12 Expostulate; 14 Extravagant; 18 Flowing; 19 Spate; 21 Fiery; 22 Deficit. Down: 1 Lorry; 2 Climax; 3 Orb; 4 Signal; 5 Memento; 8 Cottage; 11 Convene; 13 Explain; 15 Reward; 16 Napkin; 17 Attic; 20 Few.

Quiz

1. Who was born Maria Eva Duarte?
2. Of which bird is the European redwing a variety?
3. Tornado Alley lies between which two US mountain ranges?
4. How many cards are there in a tarot deck?
5. In which US state are the towns Norman and Enid?
6. Which London attraction has its own police force?
7. In which mythology was Marduk the creator of Earth and humans?
8. Which sea bird is also called the solan goose?
9. What is the study of crops and soils called?
10. In which country was Alcoholics Anonymous set up in 1934?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Lobster; 2 Franz Liszt; 3 Kookaburra; 4 Alva; 5 Peter Sellers; 6 Pontefract; 7 Seaweed; 8 A lizard; 9 Table tennis; 10 Walter Mitty.

Niner: DRUMSTICK

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

3213476 gives a fabric,
578571 gives a cloth,
986219 gives a fur.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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Early days but worth a second look

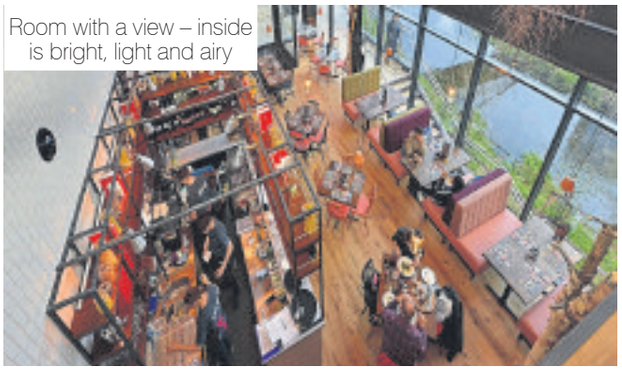
IT'S always exciting to try out a new restaurant for the first time and even better when it's a cosy dinner for two.

On a visit to M&S in Stafford I spotted Zizzi was opening opposite the store in the new Riverside complex.

I was eager to visit as many moons ago they had an amazing dish on the menu, Pasta Genovese with green beans and pesto (if I remember correctly).

The opening date was shrouded in mystery and I watched patiently as the dining space gradually took shape behind the huge glass windows.

It opened a couple of weeks before Christmas (good marketing) on a day where thick snow blanketed the land. We'd booked a table for that very evening. It was quite busy considering the conditions.



Room with a view – inside is bright, light and airy

Shroom for more – the porcini giganti tortelloni

OVERLOOKING

We were welcomed warmly and shown to a table upstairs which was more of a mezzanine level overlooking the dining area downstairs. It was toasty warm and there was a convivial buzz in the air. The furnishings were tasteful and retroesque in their styling. It was an intimate table meaning we could gaze into each other's eyes without putting off the other diners. The taste of Italy also holds a special place in our hearts as it was the scene of a rather romantic proposal.

The menu was vast with plenty of nibbles, starters and mains to choose from including pasta, pizza, risotto, along with baked dishes too. I scoured the dishes but alas, Pasta Genovese was a thing of the past. I was keen to try something new and to have a more interesting starter than just garlic bread. It's a staple in our household with most meals.

I decided on the arancini – risotto balls with mozzarella, peas and a breadcrumb coating served with a red pepper tapenade dip – and bullied him into ordering the 'little soul' bread, doughy puffs baked with garlic and smoked sea salt they come with two hummus-style dips.

A bottle of red wine was also on the agenda. We went for the Nero D'avola, Sicilia, a bargain for restaurant wine at £14.95 and it tasted pretty smooth. The waitress was bubbly, polite and helpful and while it was clear that the staff were still finding their feet, everything seemed to be running like clockwork.

The starters arrived in just the right amount of time and we decided to share them so we could sample both. The little soul bread was lovely, light and fluffy with a gorgeous golden crispy crust. The arancini balls were a little bit disappointing for me at least. He liked them.

One of the reasons I'd picked them was the mention of peas but I couldn't really taste any so that was a bit of a blow. The tepenade was full-bodied, sweet and very tasty, perfect with the salty cheese flavour.

The mains were on their way and once dishes were cleared and wine topped up and chatter resumed they arrived piping hot and decent sized portions too.

He'd gone for an Italian classic lasagne and I'd decided on something different, the porcini giganti – giant tortelloni pockets filled with ricotta and porcini mushrooms in a creamy wild mushroom sauce with baby spinach, crispy sage and riserva cheese.

He was delighted as the lasagne was creamy, tomatoey with an explosion of herbs and seasoned meat in every mouthful. But once again I had ordered badly on this evening.

The pasta was a bit too heavy going. The filling a little dry as if it had been overcooked. It was very mushroomy which overpowered any flavour of spinach or ricotta which was a shame as they were my favourite elements.

We'd also gone for a side of herby potatoes which were gorgeous a nice amount of oil and herbs and perfectly-cooked fluffy spud.

We didn't order dessert, no room, although there were some tempting choices, and requested the bill.

Unfortunately we were left sat with our plates until the end which wasn't great but as it was opening night these are things we could overlook. Perhaps the chef was still learning the dishes and the waitresses learning the ropes. But the ambience and service more than made up for this. We walked off our meal with trek home through the snow and I'm hoping for second time luckier for my meal!

LISA WILLIAMS

PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Modern detached situated in a popular location

A modern style detached property on a popular road,18, Bewley Road, Willenhall, has three bedrooms and a re-fitted bathroom.

It is for sale through Skitts at £179,950 with no chain. Its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hall, a lounge, a dining kitchen, three bedrooms, a re-fitted bathroom, double glazing, gas central heating system, a garage, driveway and pleasant rear gardens.

In more detail to the front of this home is a slabbed driveway and a lawned garden.

The entrance hall has stairs off to the first floor, while the lounge has an Adams style fireplace with a gas fire and a bow window to the front.

The dining kitchen includes a range of wall and base cupboard units with work surfaces, a gas oven and a hob, a single drainer sink unit, a storage cupboard, two double glazed windows to the rear and a door to the side.

Garden

Upstairs the landing has a loft hatch and a window to the side.

Bedroom one has a built-in wardrobe and a window to the front.

Bedroom two has a built-in wardrobe and a window to the rear, while bedroom three has a window to the front.

The bathroom has been refitted with a panelled bath and a shower over, a low flush WC, pedestal wash hand basin, a window to the rear and fully tiled walls and flooring.

The rear garden is lawned and has a gravelled area.

The garage has an up and over door, power and lighting and a wall mounted boiler.

The selling agents are expecting a great deal of interest to be shown in the sale of this property.

Skitts estate agents began in 1979 as a partnership and has proudly remained so for over 37 years. This means the people who own the company, run the company on a daily basis and are responsible for all aspects of its growth, success and professionalism.

WILLENHALL £179,950

TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Skitts
TEL: 01902 631151
EMAIL: willenhall@skitts.net

KEY FEATURES

Modern detached
3 bedrooms
Re-fitted bathroom
Garage & driveway
No chain

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Five-bedroomed detached home on a corner plot

Featuring contemporary styling, this superbly designed five double-bedroomed detached family home, 8 Ragstone Close, Reedswood, Walsall, lies on a corner plot.

It is for sale through Goodchilds Estate Agents at £295,000.

In the Harewood design, built by Cala Homes Group in 2009, it includes an open plan kitchen/diner. It has high specification fixtures and fittings, a garage and off-road parking and lies in a cul-de-sac location.

REEDSWOOD
£295,000

A spokesman for the selling agent said: "The 'Reedswood Place' development is ideally positioned with Walsall town centre a short drive away. The property is within a short walk to Reedswood Park and there are schools for all ages nearby. For commuters, the M6 motorway network is accessed by Junction 10 and is less than one mile away.

"Set at the head of the cul-de-sac on a generous plot, this imposing family home, built to The Harewood design, briefly comprises a contemporary style open plan kitchen/diner with views over a good-sized rear garden and five double bedrooms with an en-suite shower room to the master."

For further information, or to book that all important viewing, contact 01922 711444.

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Energy Rating - D | NEW

Birkdale Road
Walsall
- Modern Detached Family Home
- PVCu Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Four Bedrooms (Master with En-suite)
- Front Lounge
- Rear Dining Room
- Re-Fitted Kitchen, Utility Room
- Family Bathroom

£295,000

Energy Rating - D | NEW

Mallory Crescent
Walsall
- Semi-Detached family home
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Front Lounge
- Rear Dining Room. Kitchen
- Three Bedrooms, Bathroom
- Driveway, Rear Garden
- NO ONWARD CHAIN

£128,000

Energy Rating - D | NEW

High Hill
Essington
- Victorian semi detached house of character
- gas central heating, double glazing
- Front and Rear Reception Rooms
- Large Re-fitted Kitchen, Utility Area, Guests Cloa
- 2 Double Bedrooms,
- Shower Room/WC
- Single Garage, Driveway
- Landscaped Gardens

£199,950

Energy Rating - D | NEW

Somerfield Road
Bloxwich
- Mid terrace house
- Gas centrally heated & double glazed
- Newly Installed Kitchen/Diner, Front Lounge
- 3 BedroomS
- Rear Off road parking
- Viewing Essential
- NO ONWARD CHAIN
- Bathroom/WC

£120,000

Energy Rating - D | NEW

Stanley Street
Bloxwich
- End Town House
- Gas Central Heated
- Double Glazed
- Lounge
- Dining Kitchen
- 3 Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Parking & Workshop

£115,000

Energy Rating - B | NEW

Station View
Walsall
- Immaculate apartment
- Ultra modern design and style
- Open plan lounge/dining kitchen with appliances
- 2 good bedrooms, bathroom/WC
- Communal Grounds
- En-suite
- Close to local amenities
- No Onward Chain

£99,950

Energy Rating - C | NEW

Virola Court
Bloxwich
- Spacious Penthouse Apartment
- Allocated Parking
- Heated & Double Glazed
- Spacious Lounge, Fitted Kitchen
- 2 Double Bedrooms
- En-Suite, Family Bathroom
- Communal Gardens
- No Onward Chain

£115,000

Energy Rating - TBC | NEW

Wood Lane
Pelsall
- Semi-Detached House
- PVCu Double Glazing (where specified), Gas Centra
- Front Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Utility Area, Downsta
- Conservatory
- Three Bedrooms
- Driveway
- Rear Garden
- No Onward Chain

£145,000

Energy Rating - TBC | NEW

Field Road
Bloxwich
- Extended End Town House
- Gas Central Heated & Double Glazed
- 2 Reception Rooms
- Kitchen, Utility/Guests WC
- 3 Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Driveway
- Rear Garden

£140,000

Energy Rating - TBC | NEW

Daw End Lane
Rushall
- End Tow House
- Gas centrally heated
- PVCu double glazed
- 2 reception rooms, kitchen
- 2 bedrooms, en-suite/WC
- Attic bedroom 3, parking, gardens
- SORRY NO DSS, PETS OR SMOKERS
- ?180 reference fees apply

£620

Energy Rating - D

Pugh Crescent
Bentley
- Semi detached house
- Gas centrally heated
- PVCu double glazed
- Lounge, kitchen, utility
- 3 bedrooms, Bathroom/WC
- Ample parking, gardens
- SORRY NO DSS, PETS OR SMOKERS
- ?180 reference fee applies.

£675

Energy Rating - TBC

Nursery Road
Bloxwich
- Traditional Semi-Detached House
- PVCu double glazing and gas central heating.
- Front Lounge,
- Rear Kitchen/Diner
- 3 Bedrooms
- Shower Room/wc
- Off Road Parking, Rear Garden.
- SORRY NO DSS, PETS OR SMOKERS

£575

Energy Rating - E

Broad Lane
Bloxwich
- Victorian end town house
- Gas centrally heated
- PVCu double glazed
- 2 reception rooms, kitchen
- 2 bedrooms
- bathroom/WC
- Low maintenance garden
- Detached garage to rear

£115,000

Energy Rating - E

Wolverhampton Road
Pelsall
- Semi-Detached House
- Gas centrally heated
- Double glazed
- Lounge, Dining Room, Conservatory, Fitted Kitchen
- 2 Bedrooms, Bathroom/WC
- Small Garage/ Storage Area
- Driveway
- Garden

£175,000

Park Home

Lodgefield Park
Stafford
- Well Maintained Park Home
- Being for the Over 55'S
- Electric Heating, Hallway
- Lounge/Dining Room
- Fitted Kitchen, Utility Area
- 2 Double Bedrooms, En-Suite
- Family Bathroom
- Parking, Gardens

£100,000

Energy Rating - B

Portsea Street
Walsall
- Two Bedroom Semi-Detached House
- Gas Central Heating, Solar Panels
- PVCu Double Glazing
- Front Lounge, Dining Room,
- Fitted Kitchen, Cloakroom/wc
- Two Bedrooms, Bathroom
- Driveway, Rear Garden
- NO ONWARD CHAIN

£115,000

Energy Rating - B

Penmire Grove
Rushall
- Three Storey Town House
- PVCu double glazing & Gas Central Heating
- Fitted Kitchen
- Rear Lounge/Diner
- Three excellent sized Bedrooms
- (master with en-suite)
- Family Bathroom
- Rear Garden

£179,995

Energy Rating - C

Lydford Road
Bloxwich
- Detached Bungalow
- Immaculately Presented
- Gas Central Heating, PVCu double glazing.
- 2 Bedrooms, Lounge,
- Breakfast kitchen, Conservatory
- Shower Room,
- Tandem Garage Driveway
- Gardens

£249,950

Energy Rating - D

Stoney Lane
Bloxwich
- Traditional Detached House
- Immaculately Presented
- Large Corner Plot
- PVCu Double Glazing (where specified)
- Gas Central Heating
- Lounge, Dining Room, Family Room,
- Fitted Kitchen, Conservatory
- Three Bedrooms

£365,000

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- Corner Plot
- Hallway
- Lounge
- Kitchen/Diner
- 2 Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Private Driveway

£140,000

BLOXWICH
COALMEADOW CLOSE

- Modern Semi Detached
- Hallway, Lounge
- Refitted Kitchen
- Conservatory
- 2 Bedrooms
- Refitted Bathroom
- Rear Garden
- Driveway

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- Lounge
- Refitted Kitchen
- Utility Room
- 2 Double Bedrooms
- Generous Garage

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REDUCED

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HARVEST GROVE

- Detached Coach House Apartment
- Entrance Hallway
- Open Plan Kitchen
- Lounge/Diner
- 2 Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Garage
- Driveway

£130,000

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Ferndown Close, Turnberry Estate
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- Four Good Sized Bedrooms
- Potential to Extend (STPP)
- Double Garage
- EPC - TBC

£340,000

Werneth Grove, Turnberry Estate
- Extended Detached Family Home
- Block Paved Driveway
- Main Lounge
- Sitting Room and Dining Area
- Conservatory
- EPC - TBC

£325,000

NEW

Stamping Way, Bloxwich
- Immaculately Presented Town House
- Contemporary Style Decor
- Three/Four Bedrooms
- Fitted Wardrobes to the Master Bedroom
- En-Suite
- Rear Garage and Parking Space
- Located Close to Bloxwich High Street
- Walsall Academy Nearby
- No Upward Chain
- EPC - C (80)

O.I.E.O £200,000

NEW

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- Underfloor Heating
- Communal Owners' Lounge
- Viewing Essential
- EPC - B (82)

£169,950

NO CHAIN

Baslow Road, Bloxwich
- Detached Family Home
- Scope For Extension & Improvements (STPP)
- Highly Desirable Area
- Three Bedrooms
- Downstairs WC

Offers Invited £300,000

Griffins Crescent, Walsall
- 'The Kingsford' Design by Taylor Wimpey
- Popular Saddlers Brook Development
- Three Bedroom Semi Detached
- Easy Access to Local Towns and the M6
- Granite Tiled Flooring in Hall & Kitchen
- EPC - C (79)

£190,000

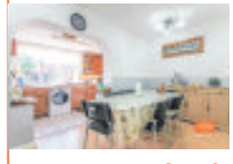
Bentley Lane, Reedswood
- Detached Three Storey House
- Two Reception Rooms
- Extended Breakfast Kitchen
- Three Good Sized Bedrooms
- Large Family Bathroom
- EPC - TBC

£189,950

NEW

Harden Close, Leamore
- Modern Four Bedroom Detached
- Three Storey
- Four Good Sized Bedrooms
- Two Bathrooms
- Ground Floor WC
- Low Maintenance Rear Garden
- Off Road Parking
- Cul-de-Sac
- Excellent Condition Throughout
- EPC - C (75)

£155,000

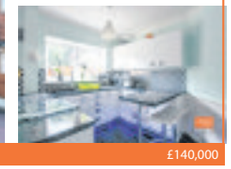


Portsea Street, Leamore
- Extended Semi-Detached House
- Lounge, Dining Area & Extended Kitchen
- Ground Floor WC
- Two Double Bedrooms
- Gas Central Heating
- Double Glazing
- Solar Panels
- Off Road Parking
- NO CHAIN
- Very Low Energy Bills (EPC Rating B-90)

£115,000

NO CHAIN

Odell Crescent, Leamore
- Beautifully Presented End of Terrace
- Contemporary Style Decor
- Superb High Gloss Kitchen
- Laundry Room and Side Covered Access
- Two Double Bedrooms
- EPC - C (70)



£140,000

NO CHAIN

Usk Close, Bloxwich
- Well Presented Semi-Detached
- Cul-de-Sac Location
- Driveway for Two Cars
- Ground Floor WC
- Fitted Breakfast Kitchen
- EPC - D (68)

£140,000

NO CHAIN

Wenlock Gardens, Leamore
- Two Bedroom Semi-Detached House
- Lounge with French Doors
- Fitted Kitchen
- Ground Floor WC
- Gas Central Heating
- EPC - D (68)

£110,000

NO CHAIN

Clarendon Street, Bloxwich
- Well Presented Period Style Property
- Two Reception Rooms
- Gas Central Heating
- Double Glazing
- Three Bedrooms
- EPC - E (52)

O.I.E.O £110,000

NO CHAIN

Saldavian Court, Pleck
- Two Bedroom Flat
- Ideal Buy-To-Let (450pcm)
- Cul-de-sac Location
- Close to Pleck Park
- Garage to Rear
- EPC - F (30)

£85,000

REDUCED

Sheridan Close, Pleck
- Two Bedroom Bungalow
- Available to Over 55's
- No Chain
- Communal Gardens
- Communal Parking Area
- EPC - C (69)

£85,000

Tameside Close, Willenhall
- Immaculately Presented Town House
- Set Over Three Floors
- Four Double Bedrooms
- Two Bathrooms
- 100% Available for £160,000
- EPC - C (79)

£80,000

NO CHAIN

Marsh Street, Walsall
- Studio Apartment in Walsall Town Centre
- Separate Shower Room
- Fitted Kitchen
- Balcony with Canal Views
- Close to all amenities
- EPC- E (78)

O.I.E.O £70,000

Terret Close, Walsall
- One Bedroom Modern Apartment
- Secure Gated Development
- Allocated Parking
- Tenant Currently Pays £450 PCM
- Offered By Modern Method of Auction
- EPC - E (47)

GUIDE £60,000

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Knights Close, Willenhall — £330,000
3 | 6 | 3 | EPC C

The Hayes, Summer Hayes, Willenhall — £199,950
1 | 3 | 1 | EPC D

Bewley Road, Off Stroud Av, Willenhall — Offers in the Region Of £179,950
1 | 3 | 1 | EPC D

Burleigh Close, Summer Hayes, Willenhall — £170,000
1 | 3 | 1 | EPC F

Darvel Road, Off Stroud Avenue, Willenhall — OIXO £160,000
2 | 3 | 1 | EPC TBC

Shoreham Close, Willenhall — £155,000
1 | 2 | 1 | EPC E

Stirling Crescent, Summer Hayes, Willenhall — £152,000
1 | 2 | 1 | EPC D

London Drive, Off Granville Street, Willenhall — £150,000
1 | 3 | 2 | EPC C

Bloxwich Road South, Willenhall — £144,950
1 | 3 | 2 | EPC C

Montgomery Road, Bentley, Walsall — OIXO £120,000
1 | 3 | 1 | EPC D

Kingfisher Court, Clarkes Lane, Willenhall — £87,500
1 | 2 | 1 | EPC C

Temple Square, Willenhall — Auction Guide Price £75,000
2 | 3 | 1 | EPC D

Forest Court, Lichfield Road, New Invention, Willenhall — £80,000
1 | 2 | 1 | EPC TBC

Rosehill, Willenhall — £77,000
1 | 2 | 1 | EPC C

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Leather		
Chair	£30	£15
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Brookes & Son ROOFING SERVICES
★ *Discounts for OAP's*
★ Insurance Work ★ *Lead Work*
★ Ridge Tiles Replaced
★ *Flat Roofs* ★ Pointing
★ Rubber Roofing (E.P.D.M.)
★ Chimney Repairs ★ Fascias & Gutters
25 years in the business
FAMILY RUN - FREE QUOTES
ALL AREAS COVERED
Call: 01922 711150
07722 533247

Roofing

WALSALL ROOFING SPECIALISTS
AS RECOMMENDED ON
thebestofwalsall
Flat Roof Specialists
• Slate and Tile Repairs
• Flat Roofs, EPDM Rubber Roofing
• uPVC Soffits and Fascias
• Chimney Reducing
• Guttering Repairs
• All Pointing Work
• Insurance Work
• 20 Year Guarantee
• Dry Ridge Systems
• 25 Years Experience
• Re-Roofs
• All genuine quotes beaten
• Special rates for senior citizens
FREE ESTIMATES
CALL MARK:
01922 694548 / 07790 214856
www.walsallroofingspecialists.co.uk

Tiling

ANDY'S CERAMIC WALL & FLOOR TILING
• Kitchen and bathroom fitting service
• General home improvements
FREE QUOTES
Tel: 01922 494193
Mobile: 0782 1837399

Final whistle GO AL
THE ONLY READ FOR REAL FANS EVERY MONDAY
Part of Express & Star Ltd
Express & Star

If an ad is wrong, the ASA is here to put it right.
ASA.org.uk
Advertising Standards Authority

To advertise your business and reach more than 72,000 potential customers...

1 Call us on... 01543 465341

2 E-mail us at... sarah.winfield@expressandstar.co.uk

3 Post to... Sarah Jones, Walsall Chronicle, Queen Square, Cannock. WS11 1ES

Classified Ads

Buy Local, **Sell** Local

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FreeAds

IT'S FREE IT'S EASY

For items up to **£250**

VISIT:

bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk

Simply press the free ad icon.
Sorry, no pets, guns or livestock.
Private advertisers only.

Place a paid for advert

By Phone 01902 317878
8.30am - 5.30pm Mon - Fri.
Closed Sat/Sun and Bank Holidays

Online
bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk

In person
At your local Express & Star Office.
Cancel/amend, call before 3.00pm Monday - Friday for the next day's advertisement or also before 3.00pm Friday for Monday's advertisement.

Funeral Directors

Turn To Us For Help and Support

In your time of need we'll take care of all the funeral arrangements.

- Est. 1907
- 24 hour service

G. Gibbs Funeral Directors
44 All Saints Way
West Bromwich B71 1PZ
0121 553 0442
Dignity Caring Funeral Services
Part of Dignity plc. A British Company.

1 Family

Elderly & Disabled

WREKIN STAIRLIFTS reconditioned lifts from £799. New available. 01952 405397/07897 273617

2 Leisure Time

Bikes

JACKSON-HATELEY CYCLES
www.jacksonhateleycycles.co.uk
MASSIVE SALE NOW ON
Book your cycle now for Easter at sale price
Get your fantastic bargain now
All cycles built and guaranteed with a 24 hour repair service
HATELEY'S
Simply the best
Ring Dave on
01902 782344
458 Stafford Road, Oxley, Wolverhampton

Caravans Wanted

All Caravans Wanted
Any Age or Condition
*CASH * WAITING*
Immediate collection
Call Bill on 07825 325 913

Caravans/ Motorhomes

CARAVANS FOR SALE with seaviews. Clarach Bay near Aberystwyth from £9,995 includes 2018 site fees. Call Phil on: 01970 828277. sales@clarachbay.com

Self Catering Holidays

BURNHAM-ON-SEA
Self Catering Holiday Apartments
Disabled Facilities
Pet Friendly
01278 794111
www.GoSomerset.co.uk

Travel Abroad

READERS ARE REMINDED to check with any Advertisers that their holiday costs are fully covered by a recognised bonding or insurance scheme.

Sports & Leisure

FreeAds
IT'S FREE, IT'S EASY
For items upto £250.
Online at
bookanad.
expressandstar.co.uk

3 Home & Services

Antiques

Louis Taylor
Fine Art Auctioneers & Valuers
House Clearances & Collections arranged at short notice for our monthly auctions
01782 638100

In Your Garden

6x5 Lap Panels
£17 each (inc vat)
WS3 2BQ
Bloxwich Fencing Ltd
or 01922 712184

AT SHEDRITE order Sheds, Cabins, Summerhouses/Playhouses. Willenhall Rd WV1 2HQ 01902 450137

SLABS 450mm x 450mm RIVEN FACED, only £1.87 inc. VAT. Ranton Building Supplies: 01543 276006.

Items For Sale

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
That the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

ASH RECLAMATION new and used building materials, upvc doors and windows 01543 453222.

CORRUGATED GALVANISED Sheets. New, £8 can deliver. Also box profile and PVC/polycarb. David Broxton on 07834 489558.

✔ CASH PAID ✔
£300+ PER OUNCE
FOR 9 CARAT GOLD.
ANY AMOUNT COLLECTED!
Lady Buyer
gold coins, pre - 47 silver coins, watches, costume jewellery, porcelain, any oriental items, old brass items, any silver items, War medals military etc.
HOUSE CLEARANCES!
✔ Call: 01922 495066 or 07971 783206 ✔

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

Items Wanted

READERS ARE ADVISED to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

Loans

READERS ARE REMINDED that they may require professional advice before entering into obligations.

specialists at your service

Aerials

AA DIGITAL AERIALS Checkatrade.com
AERIALS FITTED FROM £79.99
01902 858191 • 01384 429166
01543 439095 • 01922 716029

A AERIAL AND SKY SPECIALIST Digital aerials, CCTV cameras, TV wall mount fitted. 07850 330251.

CLASSIFIEDS FOR YOU!

"I am very pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising Contract"

Steve - AA Digital Aerials

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

Alarms/Security

PREMIER ALARMS
Supplied and Fitted £249
Servicing and Repairs
12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
Call: 0121 601 9791

Appliance Repairs

A SAME DAY REPAIR - Cookers Autos Fridges Vacs and Micros. Call 07900 578897 / 07801 746853.

Building Services

P.FENLON BUILDERS All aspects of building. Block paving, plastering, brickwork etc. 01902 445315 / 07790 286187.

Building Supplies

RECLAIMED BRICKS, Tiles, Slates, Oakbeams, Flooring, York Stone. Cawarden 01889 574066. sales@cawardenreclaim.co.uk

Carpentry & Joinery

If it's wood we do it!
All your carpentry needs.
No job too small.
Doors, Locks, Gates made, Fencing.
Call 07825 368366

SPR CARPENTRY Six internal pre-primed doors fully fitted from £370. 0121 5322672 or 07958 552625.

Carpet Fitters

A CARPETS & VINYLS supplied or just fitted, quality samples brought to your home, no job too small, free quotes call Mark 01543 820598 / 07941 619694.

Electrical Services

MB ELECTRIC.CO.UK Home wiring specialist. NICEIC. High quality local service. Freephone: 0800 211 8398 / 07939 503905

Fencing

CLASSIFIEDS FOR YOU!

"I am extremely happy with the service I get from my Express & Star Classified Sales Representatives and would recommend them to anyone! They have done a very professional job with my website so I get online enquiries as well now."
Michael- Portway Fencing

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

PORTWAY FENCING
SPECIAL OFFER
10 Bays of quality fencing, concrete posts, gravel boards £695
Heavy duty panels supplied & fitted.
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm
Sat 8am - 12noon
83 Portway Rd, W'bury
DELIVERY AVAILABLE
www.portwayfencing.co.uk

C B SHEDS & FENCING
We supply & fit. Free quotes.
Call: 01922 720270
We also supply sleepers and decking

Gates

ALL METAL GATES,RAILINGS, etc. Free quotes, also repairs & fitting. 07903 500642 24 hours.

DARLASTON FABS 30 years exp in supplying/ fitting gates and railings. Free quotes: 07497 667752.

Kitchen Fitters

THE KITCHEN FITTER Over 20 years experience. Call 07881 654757 or 01543 373233.

Gardening Services

Landywood Tree & Landscaping Services
All garden work, tree felling/lopping, pruning, hedges trimmed, turf, patios, fencing, block-paving etc.
www.landywoodlandscaping.co.uk
01922 898 710 / 07973 177 976

Gas Fitting

GAS SERVICES
- Boilers • Cookers
- Fires • Gas Checks
- Landlord Certificates
- Gas Leaks Traced

Fitted, Serviced and Repaired
Same Day Service
Free Quotes
DISCOUNTS FOR OAPs
Call: 01902 366855/ 07761 973975

READERS ARE ADVISED
To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered.
It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

House Clearances

A1 HOUSE CLEARANCE
Full, part and single rubbish removed.
Garage and sheds cleared.
Leather 3 piece suites and leather chesterfields wanted.
01922 492007

A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken. 07852 172641 / 07710 360327 / 01902 534021

ALL ROUND CLEARANCE
Professional family run business
House clearances full or part, also garages, sheds etc.
Telephone Kev
07794 912844

HARVEYS HOUSE CLEARANCES Quick, discreet and professional. 07939 421862 / 01902 410433

Painters/ Decorators

C&D DECORATING City & Guilds / Wallpapering. Tiling and Flooring. Free quotes, call 07973 286288.

C I PAINTING & DECORATING Over 30 yrs experience.City & Guilds approved. Free Quotes. 07913 732756 or 01902 650716.

ADMJ
Decorating & Maintenance
City and Guilds. No Job Too Small.
OAP Discounts
FREE QUOTES
07855 957935 01902 630028

Plans Prepared

ADAM DESIGN, Building Plans. Drawn and submitted to council. Tel: 01902 620200 / 07841 654037. Email: adamdesign@sky.com

BUILDING Plans: Prepared/submitted. K J Bradley 01902 373248 07792 165767. www.plans4u.co.uk

PROFESSIONAL HAND ink detailed drawings prepared. 01922 684503/ 07730 888063.

Express & Star
LANDSCAPE GARDENERS!
CLAIM YOUR FREE ADVERT
(T&Cs Apply)
Call Claire Smith: 01902 319661
claire.smith@expressandstar.co.uk

Plastering

D&C PLASTERING AND RENDERING Fast, clean, reliable service. Also building work. Free Quotes 07793 747829 or 01543 300444.

MINT PLASTERING
For the very best in plastering and rendering, full rooms inc materials from 110. Halls, stairs and landings from 200
30 years experience.
Free quotes. All work guaranteed
01543 327130 / 07519 694516

Plumbing & Heating

A.A HEATING & PLUMBING All gas work. Install/ Service/ Repair. Free quotes call: 07540 950588.

A RELIABLE PLUMBER No job too small. No call out fee. Call Lee: 07713 149278 / 01902 330351.

TAD PLUMBING & HEATING
For all your plumbing needs.
30 years experience
24 HOUR CALL OUT, NO FEE!
Call Trevor on 07791 319397
www.tadplumbingandheatingwolverhampton.co.uk

PLUMBING WORK UNDERTAKEN No job too small or large. Call Will for a free quote on: 07521 411108.

Removals

A2B REMOVALS Cheap and reliable removal service. Insured. 07817 842980 or 01902 744829.

A DJ REMOVALS/ house clearance/single item. Budget rates/reliable. 01902 652346 /07912 980177

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

KT HOUSE REMOVALS
12 years experience.
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

KC REMOVALS We beat any quote, full or part loads, all areas. Anything considered. Call on 07867 862227.

Roofing

CLIFF NICHOLLS
Roofing & Scaffolding
Rubber Roofing
37 years experience
FREEPHONE
(0800) 220 - 729

AA ROOF DOCTOR
FLAT ROOF SPECIALIST
ALL ROOFING WORK UNDERTAKEN
Tile replacement/Chimney pointing
Fascias & Guttering
01902 562393

ROOFING & GUTTERING
main, flat, felt, firestone rubber, fibreglass, all repointing, fascias, soffits, gutters. Free quotes. All quotes beaten. 8am-8pm.
01902 722447

MG ROOFING
Flat Roofing, Tiling, Roof Repairs, Fascias and Gutters.
Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.
www.mgroofingwestmidlands.co.uk

Skip Hire

A absolute affordable skip
RUSSELL SKIPS
Mini, midi skips
Prompt delivery / collection
(0121) 520 3388 / 07721 387990

WOLVERHAMPTON SKIP HIRE
MINI, MIDI & BUILDERS SKIPS WITH DOORS
Established 26 years
Call:
01902 722876

Waste management

SB

Recycling services

01902 459667
0121 558 2120
01543 500 599

CLASSIFIEDS FOR YOU!

"We are very happy with our Classified Contract within the Express & Star and the enquiries our adverts bring in."

Pally - Quika Skips

For great business results call 01902 319 191

ClassifiedAds Brought to you by Express & Star

Grinsells Skip Hire LTD
Mini, Midi, Maxi, Large Skips.
Monday to Friday.
Saturday half day.
0121 555 6060

QUICKA SKIPS
Mini, Midi, 6 Yard with doors and Builders.
7 days - Prompt Service
01902 404800 / 07983 580884
www.quickaskips.co.uk

GOLDSHILL SKIP & SELF DELIVERIES
BRING YOUR WASTE TO US
(any size vehicle)
General, green, wood (can work out cheaper than a skip)
OR
HIRE A SKIP FROM US -
Phone for prices
0121 557 3346
82 Pikehelve Street,
West Bromwich, B70 0TU

Tree Services

BUDGET TREE SURGERY Tall or small. Conifers & hedge trimming. Shrubs pruned, tidy ups & make overs 01543324608/ 07936882552

Upholstery

UPHOLSTERY SERVICES 3pcs/springs/caravans/pubs/club/antiques. 01902 689644 / 07817 842980.

t.v. / home entertainment

Service

AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST Any TV Repairs. Digital aerials, sky, CCTV cameras. TV wall mounts and TV set ups. 07850 330251.

4 Pets & Animals

Equestrian Corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies have the required Passport information.

Guns & Dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

Pets Corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

GREYHOUNDS MAKE WONDERFUL PETS
All neutered, innoculated and microchipped.
Call 01902 291080 or visit
www.gtwolverhampton.co.uk
Greyhound Trust Wolverhampton
@gtwolverhampton

WEDNESBURY SANCTUARY needs homes for 2 rescued young cats Roxanne & Alfie, neutered & vaccinated 0121 502 5027.

5 Business & Farming

Business Opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering into any obligations.

6 Property

Overseas Property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

Properties Wanted

We buy houses
Sell your house fast
- avoid repossession
- behind on payments
- job relocation
- unwanted inheritance
What more -
we buy in any condition
No estate agent fees
We pay all your legal fees
ACT NOW !
Contact us on :
07796 801219 / 07988 882090

Properties Wanted

WE PAY 100% of purchase price EVERY TIME!
FAST 4 Your House CASH
You agree the price, we buy the house...
• NO AGENTS FEES • COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU
• FREE SOLICITORS • ANY HOUSE, ANY CONDITION
BLACK COUNTRY HOMES
0800 999 999 6
01384 500 500
30 yrs
www.black-countryhomes.co.uk * subject to terms

CASH NOW FOR YOUR HOUSE
Wolverhampton properties
UP TO £25,000 CASH ADVANCE NOW (in 24hrs)
• Free Solicitors • No Fees • Any House • Any Condition
We can buy your house in 2 days
0800 389 6788 01902 628047
Lines open 24 hours a day 7 days a week
Terms applicable

WE BUY ANY HOUSE CASH
CALL US FREE 24 Hours/ 7days
0800 246 1047
All Your Costs Paid & No Selling Fees
We Buy Any Area & Any Condition
STOP Repossession/Eviction
Release Your Equity Today
www.UKFASTSALE.co.uk
GET UP TO £20,000 CASH ADVANCE
5 STAR REVIEWS
UKFastSale.co.uk
FREE Solicitors, FREE Survey, FREE Home Removals, FREE EPC

Yes! HOME BUYERS
THE EASY WAY TO SELL YOUR HOUSE
We Buy Houses For Cash
Free Valuation? Yes! No Fees? Yes! Any Location? Yes!
Fast Sale? Yes! Any House? Yes! Any Condition? Yes!
Get your FREE, instant cash offer today!
The Property Ombudsman
Call 01922 235 885
or text "Cash" to 66777 yeshomebuyers.com

Accommodation To Let

J9 Accommodation
NO DEPOSIT
★MOVE IN TODAY★
Studios from £90pw*
Rooms from £65pw*
*Includes Most Bills
CHECK WEBSITE FOR LIVE LIST
Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme
01902 213121
J9accommodation.com

STUDIO FLAT All amenities, low deposit, vacant now. Near Sandwell Hospital. 07828 504083.

Accommodation To Let

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

7 Jobs

Building & Construction

PLASTERING Boarders required. Experience necessary. Working on housing sites in & around West Midlands. Must have current CSCS card. Call 01922 276006 between 8am - 5pm.

Engineering

FABRICATORS required by busy expanding steel fabrication company, ideally have experience, contact Fischer Eng Products, Maybrook Trading Estate, unit 2, Maybrook Road, Walsall, WS8 7DG TEL No 01543 371881

Courses

BIRMINGHAM: 5-6 May and 5-6 September
STOKE: 6-7 August TELFORD: 8-9 August
WOLVERHAMPTON: 8-9 March & 25-26 July
Accredited ocn
Learn how to take blood
TRAIN AS A PHLEBOTOMIST
Introduction to Phlebotomy
TWO DAY COURSE - NATIONALLY RECOGNISED
• Allied Healthcare Career Path
• Accredited (advanced) qualification
• No previous experience required
For more info. or to book online: www.geopace.com
High demand in: Hospitals - GP Surgeries - Clinics - Private Sector - MOD - Research

Full Time General

THE APPRENTICESHIP SHOW
THE JOBBOX
Apprenticeships are open to ALL ages
Come and find out how they could work for you
Thursday 8 March 2018
The International Centre, Telford
12noon - 7.30pm Last entry 7pm

www.telfordjobbox.co.uk/tas18
Showcasing 100's of apprenticeships opportunities across Telford and Wrekin, Shropshire, The West Midlands and beyond.
ARMY BE THE BEST
STAR
Shropshire Council
Telford & Wrekin COUNCIL

Barhale
Our successful tendering team is growing.
Our Walsall based team need:
SENIOR CIVIL ESTIMATOR
From a Civil Engineering background to join our already successful team, if this is of interest to you please go to the link below
http://www.barhale.co.uk/barhale-careers/
The reference details for this role are WC589
BID MANAGER / BID WRITER
We also need an experienced Bid Manager / Bid Writer to ensure that we deliver high quality, timely and compelling submissions.
A Civil engineering degree / HNC or similar would be beneficial for both roles.
For further information please go to our website and upload your CV to our link
http://www.barhale.co.uk/barhale-careers/
The Reference for this role is WC579 found on our website

Office & Secretarial

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR
Due to the company's expansion we are currently recruiting for an Office Administrator to join on on full time permanent basis. Your primary role will be liaise with customers & lettings agents, arranging contractor / engineer appointments, processing job sheets & quotations together with supporting the rest of the team.

We are a professional independent company based in **Aldridge** & we are looking for someone with a good telephone manner, must be able to work on own initiative, having experience in diary management & Microsoft office would be an advantage but not essential. Must be IT literate and be able to work as part of a team. Working hours are Monday to Friday 9am-5.30pm and we offer competitive rates of pay.
Please send CV to
accounts@assuredlimited.co.uk

ORDER PROCESSOR - Duties include serving customers, order picking, packing, invoicing and despatch. Previous customer liaison experience preferred. Email your CV to sales@body-shock.com

Part Time - General

LEGAL CASHIER
with Knowledge of Solicitors Accounts Rules required.
Position is Part-Time - hours to suit
Knowledge of Xero an advantage but training can be given.
References will be required.
Please send CV to:
as@shepsolicitors.co.uk or write to
SHEPHERDS SOLICITORS
25 Station Street
Walsall WS2 9JZ
NO AGENCIES

8 Motoring

Cars Over £1500

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

BARGAIN

BMW 530D
54 reg,
140,000 miles,
good condition,
8 months MoT.
£2,150 or very near offer.
07836 568903.

FIESTA 1.25 ZETEC
2007,5dr, 55k, silver, electric windows and mirrors, MoT Aug, Alloys, CD, Service history.
£1,750.
07930 755566.

ECONOMICAL

HONDA CIVIC
56 regn, 12 months MoT, FSH, Red, Petrol.
Good Condition.
£2,000
01543 279795.

PEUGEOT BIPPER HDI75
Jan 2014, 47,500 Miles abs, electric windows, air bag, air con, FSH, MoT 1/9, central locking, diesel, Stereo, CD. HP free. Major Service June 17
£3,900 ono
07545290655

TOYOTA RAV 4 XT3
2005, 3 door, 107,000 miles, gold, abs, electric windows, electric mirrors, air con, fsh, MoT, superb condition.
£2,995.
01902 744023.

LOW MILEAGE

VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6
SRI, Grey, January 2010, 4dr,11 mths MoT, 11, 900 mls only. New Shape.Fully loaded, Showroom condition. Sale due to bereavement.
£4,495 ono
07950 182891

Cars Under £1500

BARGAIN

NISSAN MICRA 1.2
53 reg., genuine 77,000 miles, MoT'd.
£850
07864 842076.

Commercial Vehicles

MUST BE SEEN

VAUXHALL COMBO 1300cc
2012, 12 months MoT, no advisories, 118,000 miles, very good condition.
£3,300
01889 570265 / 07975 672997.

Motorbikes

NFL MOTORCYCLE TRAINING **CBT** to full licence. Call 8am - 9pm for deals 01902 494422.

Scrap Vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

MCB
TOP PRICES PAID FOR ALL SCRAP CARS, VANS, BIKES, CLASSICS
Tel: 01902 408176
1000's of parts available at all times
MONMORE RD. WV1 2TZ

spares & accessories

Clutches/Brakes/ Gearboxes

WEST MIDS TRANSMISSIONS Reconditioned Gearboxes and Clutch Change. 07710 429803

Mobile Mechanics

MB MOTORS
MOBILE MECHANIC
• MOT'S • Diagnostics
• Servicing • Air con
• Tyres • Auto Electrics
07809 871733
mbmotorsstaffordshire.co.uk
mbmotors@outlook.com

Vehicle Hire

DALLAS
Van hire ..
Vans Starting from £35
Wide variety of vans:
■ Small ■ Large ■ Lutons
■ Tippers ■ Flats ■ Dropsides
■ Crew ■ Refrigerated ■ Minibus
13A , Woden Road West, Wednesbury, WS10 7SF
www.dallas-hire.co.uk Tel: 0121 647 7112

W.T.R. VAN HIRE Connects, Transits, Lutons with Tail lifts, pick-ups Open seven days. 01902 457002 / 01384 79090.

Vehicles Wanted

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

CARLA MARGARET TAMS
(formerly ILLIDGE) (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 204 Main Street Stonnall Walsall West Midlands WS9 9EB, who died on 02/02/2018, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 30/04/2018, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
JENNINGS PERKS LIMITED
3a High Street Aldridge
Walsall West Midlands WS9 8LX 7523379

10 Personals

General

LOOK

TRYING TO CONTACT
MRS E. CHIN
NEE FISHER
Anyone knowing her whereabouts in Rugeley and surrounding areas.
Please contact Mrs P Watson.

Box Number P21085 , Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

Personal

ATTRACTIVE lonely Female seeking broadminded males within a 20 mile radius. 01902 489 181.

Angels
The largest adult superstore in the Midlands
• Adult Toys • Sexy Lingerie
Extra Now Open
Unit 5 Frederick Street, Walsall WS2 9NE
01922 635544

9 Local Information

Public Notices

Walsall Council, Planning, Engineering and Transportation

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) act 1990 Development Management Procedure Order 2015 (as amended)

The below applications have been made to the Walsall Council. Applications can be viewed at First Stop Shop, Civic Centre, Walsall or online www.walsall.gov.uk/planning. Representations can be made online, email: planningservices@walsall.gov.uk or in writing to Head of Planning, Engineering and Transportation, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1DG. Representations should be made within 21 days of the date of this notice. Please note: Your letter and personal details will form part of the planning file which is a public document and will be available for inspection at the Council Offices. The information may be released as part of a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

18/0049 Accord Group FOR: MINOR MATERIAL AMENDMENT TO PLANNING PERMISION 17/0458: REMOVE DECKING, CHANGE TO GABLE END MATERIAL, CHANGE TO WINDOWS AND CHANGE TO BOUNDARY RAILINGS. AT: CAR PARK OFF SISTER DORA GARDENS, SISTER DORA GARDENS, WALSALL

18/0125 Walsall Council FOR: REPLACEMENT FLAT AND TILED ROOF AREAS AND WINDOWS AND NEW EXTERNAL ROOF MOUNTED PLANT DECK AT: WALSALL COUNCIL, CENTRAL LIBRARY, LICHFIELD STREET, WALSALL, WS1 1TR

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Welcome to Old Hill – new signing Naqaash Tahir

Test match players Ron and Dean Headley and Mushtaq Mohammed have all represented Old Hill Cricket Club down the years

James Lane, centre, of sponsors Homeserve Furniture Repairs Ltd, with, from left, club captain Jonathan Wright, chairman Mo Javaid, Naqaash Tahir and first XI skipper Ravi Nagra

Old Hill bid to make the long climb back

OLD HILL Cricket Club chairman Mo Javaid is determined to get the club on the front foot this summer

The Haden Hill outfit have found themselves in a spin in recent years with back-to-back relegations meaning they will start this season in the bottom tier of the Birmingham League.

To cricket players and followers of a certain vintage that fact is difficult to comprehend. Old Hill are steeped in history and were one of the big-hitters on the club cricket scene.

During their halcyon days in the late 80s and early 90s they appeared in five National Knockout finals at Lord's and were triumphant on four occasions.

Troubled

They had a following that was the envy of clubs up and down the country with ex-Test cricketers such as Ron Headley (West Indies), Mushtaq Mohammed (Pakistan) and Greg Matthews (Australia) plying their trade while a young Dean Headley would go on to represent England.

But times have not been so kind since the club dropped out of the Birmingham League top flight in 2006 and last season's troubled campaign ended with them taking another hit.

But what's gone is gone as far as Javaid is concerned and he is only looking to the future.

His passion for the place is obvious as he talks about the good times and the bad.

"I was voted in as chairman in July last year so this will be my first full season in that role," said Javaid.

"But this is my 33rd season at the club. I have seen all the good times, everything that was going Old Hill won it.

SPORT FEATURE

By Nick Elwell

"The numbers have declined but the better standard of cricket you play you will get people back."

"I have played here and watched games here when there has been five or six hundred people watching.

"Obviously the numbers have declined but the better standard of cricket you play you will get people back.

"We have got a fantastic following still. I am probably biased but as far as I am concerned it's the best in the league.

"Even now you will get 100, 200 people following. We need to give them something to shout about now."

After spending three decades at Old Hill Javaid is more qualified than most to comment and while he is upbeat and positive about the future, sometimes actions speak louder than words, and the club's first piece of winter recruitment speaks volumes.

Old Hill have made a statement of intent for the season ahead by signing former Warwickshire seamer Naqaash Tahir.

Tahir, a proven wicket-taker, posed plenty of problems for batsmen during his spells with Smethwick and Moseley.

He should prove quite a handful in division three and Javaid is delighted to have him on board and to spearhead what he hopes will be a turnaround in fortunes.

"Over the last few years things have gone backwards and unfortunately last year was the big one when we suffered relegation to division three," said Javaid.

"There were lots of reasons for that and it didn't help that we had four or five first team players injured for a long time throughout the season and then obviously the situation we had with the disciplinary hearing and being docked points after the Fordhouses game. That knocked us for six really.

"But we have said as a club that's happened and it's gone now. We have got to look to the future and we have got to be positive about things.

"And I think you can see signs of that positivity by signing Naqaash. He is a quality player.

"As soon as people saw that we had signed him I think they were thinking 'hold on what's happening?'.

Steeped

"We have been talking to him over the winter period and I think he wanted a new challenge."

Further new signings are in the pipeline for a side that will be once again led by Jonathan Wright, another man steeped in Old Hill's history, with Javaid insisting promotion is the aim.

"We want to be in the top two next season, we want to be promoted," said Javaid.

"There are lots of things happening at the club and with Naqaash coming, certainly on the cricket side, it's going to help us build as well.

"We are refurbing the clubhouse. We are having a new bar put in, new carpets, tables, chairs, curtains and that sort of stuff.

"We have got a new committee and we are all very, very keen to develop both the cricket side and the clubhouse.

"And a local company, Homeserve from Brierley Hill, are sponsoring us again.

"There is a lot of enthusiasm and we are looking forward to the season."

Enjoy knockout night with boxer McGuigan

MORE than 30 years on from one of boxing's most memorable nights, fighting legend Barry McGuigan will entertain his fans again – in Birmingham.

The Evening With . . . event takes place on March 23 at the Irish Centre in Digbeth. It was a summer evening in 1985, at the Loftus Road football ground in London, that 'The Clones Cyclone' deposed the mighty Eusebio Pedroza to win the WBA world featherweight title.

It was the culmination of a remarkable journey for the charismatic young man from County Monaghan in Ireland. His sporting triumph is a story which brought the divided communities in the north of Ireland together. Today, McGuigan writes and commentates on the sport, runs the successful Cyclone Promotions Company and manages some of the world's best boxers.

Tickets for the event, which will also include a photo opportunity, are £25 and available from either behind the bar at the Irish Centre in Digbeth or online at www.shamrockevents.co.uk

Ben goes for boxing gold on Gold Coast

BLACK County boxing hope Ben Whittaker is off to the Commonwealth Games in Australia – and warned his rivals: "I'm going for gold on the Gold Coast."

The Darlaston fighter has been selected to represent England at the games which start Down Under in April and will fight in the 75kg category.

The 20-year-old said he couldn't wait to get out there and don the England vest. "We're due to fly out in mid-march for a training camp and to get acclimatised ahead of the games," he said. "I'm going for gold on the Gold Coast. I'm not looking for anything else other than a gold medal.

"I'm going there to win and let all the others worry about me – I know that if I box how I know I can then I'll be wearing a gold medal round my neck at the end," said Whittaker, who boxes out of Firewalker Boxing Club, in Wolverhampton.

Whittaker has also set his sights on the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo before turning professional.

FA investment offers grants to new teams

A £1.5 million FA investment will give aspiring grassroots footballers from two under-represented groups a greater chance of participation.

The Grow the Game programme, delivered by the Football Foundation and launched in 2010, offers grants to grassroots clubs that wish to create new teams. This year, applications are being encouraged from clubs that want to start female or disability teams.

Grow the Game grants help to reduce the costs associated with setting up new teams, with £1,500 available for each team a club creates. Funding can help pay for FA coaching courses, league affiliation costs, referees' fees, first aid kits and strips. Applications close on March 29. For details, clubs should contact their own County FA or visit the Football Foundation website.

Grow the Game is inclusive of players from different genders, ethnic backgrounds, faiths, ages, sexual orientations and those with disabilities. Applications that originate from, or provide for, under-represented communities are being encouraged.

Sport

How's that? Cricket club looks to climb back up

Page 39

Walsall hit by injuries but win away

Saltleians 5 Walsall 24

A MUCH-changed Walsall team secured their third away win of the season against a very competitive team.

The visitors were forced to make seven changes from the team that lost heavily at Whitchurch the week before. Injuries sustained during that defeat meant five replacements were required. In addition, captain Matt Wood was unable to play because of injury and flanker Matt James is now having surgery to rectify a persistent problem.

The visitors had the best possible start with a try from scrum-half Dean Ainger.

Only five minutes in, Andy Fitzgerald left the field injured. And, after Worralow scored the next try, Luke Pittaway was also replaced, by Paul Darby.

The next try came from Nico Watkins, with Roger Weston adding the extras.

Watkins became another casualty but did return after treatment and had a hand in the bonus try, scored by debutant Jordan McColl – the strong-running Aussie is a new face at Delves Road. Weston converted.

The hosts had the last word with a try.

Walsall have a break from league action this Saturday. But United face Hereford 2nds in the semi-final of the Reserve League Cup at Delves Road.

A very strong Malvern team ran out 48-27 winners against United. The hosts scored five tries through Scott Peach (2) ,Jacob Lay, Louis Vale and Elliott Clarke with Andy Hawkins adding a penalty.

Some Walsall players were used by a depleted home side at Birmingham Barbarians. Walsall had a convincing win, Gavin Jones with three tries and two each for Michael Woodfield and McDonald Froroma.

Whittaker Hungary for more success

DARLASTON'S Benjamin Whittaker is coming into form ahead of the Commonwealth Games with a gold medal at a competition overseas.

Whittaker took the top prize and landed the Best Boxer award for the seven-strong GB Boxing team at the Bocskai tournament in Debrecen, Hungary.

The 20-year-old scored convincing victories over Russia's Shamil Khataev, Kazakhstan's Abay Tolesh and Holland's Max van der Pas.

Whittaker, who is coached by his godfather Joby Clayton at Wolverhampton's Firewalker gym outside of his national duties, is the No 1 ranked amateur middleweight in Britain.

A two-time and reigning England Elite national champion at club level, Whittaker has medalled at the Commonwealth Youth Games.

He took silver at the 2015 Youth Games in Kenya, his swansong year before becoming a senior fighter, and joined GB's podium potential squad before he was upgraded.

● Gold – See page 39

Racing ahead to collect Darley titles

From left, Box, Shelley and Lowe. *Picture: Tony Else*

THE region's best riders collected their trophies at the 53rd annual awards presentation for the Darley Moor Motor Cycle Road Race Club.

Among then were Burntwood's Lloyd Shelley, Keith Box of Wolverhampton and Andrew Lowe, of Stone.

More than 350 peopled attended the Moat House Hotel in Best Western Plus, Stoke on Trent. Darley spokesman Brian George said:"Each champion collected their respective awards from World Sidecar Champions Ben and Tom Birchall and multiple Stars of Darley winner and British Superbike rider, Richard Cooper."

Shelley, aged 33, ended the final round in style at the Derbyshire circuit in October. Having already claimed the Sound of Thunder and Formula 600 titles with a round to spare, he finished an overall fourth in the Stars of Darley. Lowe claimed the Jake Hingley Trophy in memory of a racer who began his career at Darley Moor in 2012 before his life was cut short following a crash at Cadwell Park two years later.

Anthony Eades and Wolverhampton passenger Keith Box claimed the sidecar title, while Dudley's Mark Cockerton finished second in the Classic 350 class, and Willenhall's McCauley Longmore third in the Formula 125 class.

BOSS HAPPY TO DRAW A BLANK

BOSS Jon Whitney believes Walsall's defence is growing in confidence after his side secured a goalless draw at Gillingham.

The Saddlers blunted the in-form Gills to register just their fifth clean sheet of the campaign at Priestfield on Saturday. That shut-out was Walsall's second in their last four matches.

Whitney said: "You have to be a team that can dig in, fight and defend when you have to. I thought we showed a lot of resilience.

"As a manager getting cleans sheets is what I love. It builds confidence in the back unit.

"And it's great for the goalkeeper as well. Liam Roberts is young keeper and it's good for him to get another clean sheet under his belt."

Resurgent

Saturday's clash was a worthwhile point, but is unlikely to be remembered with any fondness by the 209 Saddlers who made the 330-mile round trip. Gillingham have been resurgent since appointing Steve Lovell as boss and are now unbeaten in nine games.

The Gills' Tom Eaves had two decent chances to break the deadlock before the interval, one of them a header onto the top of the bar, while Walsall's only attempt in the opening 45 minutes came from George Dobson who saw a low 25-yard effort tipped away by Tomas Holy.

Eaves again hit the woodwork after the break, but it wasn't until the 90th minute that the Saddlers got anywhere near the Gillingham goal. However, Justin Shaibu's effort was tame.

Meanwhile, Whitney revealed he is close to finding a replacement for former goalkeeping coach Neil Cutler. The 41-year-old, who was also Walsall's first-team coach, left the Saddlers to join the back room staff at Albion in January.

But after short-listing a number of applicants, Whitney says he is now close to naming Cutler's successor.

Saddlers' Joe Edwards is grabbed by a prostrate Gillingham midfielder Jake Hessenthaler

Surprise win lifts side out of bottom two

Bloxwich 4 Streetly 1

BLOXWICH Hockey Club pulled off a surprise victory on Saturday with a comprehensive win over league high fliers Streetly.

Streetly started off strongly and dominated the opening period of the game, taking the lead within the first 15 minutes.

Bloxwich responded fantastically with Jake Perkins deflecting in a Matt Whitehouse shot from a short corner. From here on in, Bloxwich found their stride with Lewis Jecketts scoring a beautiful reverse hit to give them the lead before half-time.

Streetly came out strong in the second half but Bloxwich weathered an onslaught of attacks and went on to extended their lead with Harry Robinson scoring his first goal of the season. Then Perkins got another to give Bloxwich a comfortable win.

The three points takes Bloxwich out of the bottom two of the league and they hope to build on this victory with a win at Coalville on Saturday.

Justin time to fire home Darlo winner

Gornal 1 Darlaston Town (1874) 2

THIRD-PLACED Darlaston went behind to a very early goal scored by a former player, but came back to edge home by the odd goal in three against fourth-placed Black Country rivals.

In a pulsating game at Garden Walk, the visitors got off to the worst possible start. Ex-Darlaston player Anthony Cox scored for Gornal inside 40 seconds with a speculative shot that looped over 16-year-old keeper Ryan Lees-Stevens and into the far corner.

The visitors regained their composure and levelled on 12 minutes. A Lees-Stevens goal kick was flicked on by Leon Taylor into the path of top scorer Scott Broadway who lobbed the Gornal keeper Josh Bennett from 25 yards.

The fortunes of the game changed in the 61st minute when the home side were reduced to 10 men. A heavy tackle by Russell Brooks on Darlaston midfielder Dave Richards justified a yellow card but as both players rose to their feet words were exchanged and Brooks thrust his hand into Richards' face. Referee Lewis Mountain showed Brooks a straight red, sending the Gornal midfielder off for the second game running against Darlaston.

The winning goal came 15 minutes from time. Sam Giles whipped in a corner that was helped on by Martin Stanton and Ashley Justin fired home from eight yards.

On Saturday Darlaston entertain Herefordshire based Kington Town, ko 2pm.

Solo Waldron effort bags points for Pics

Rushall Olympic 1 Warrington 0

A FANTASTIC solo goal from Danny Waldron, just before half-time, was enough to secure three points for the hosts at Dales Lane.

Connor Tinnion blazed over on five minutes and on 43, Waldron tested keeper Aaron Taylor with a rasping volley. The opener came barely a minute later. Waldron evaded a couple of strong challenges as he beat the Workington defence and slotted home.

The same player could have put the game to bed on 87 minutes. With three Pics players to square to, Waldron shot instead and his effort was deflected wide.

★★★

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